



Table of Contents

Executive Summary

- Overall Purpose.....ES-1
- Corridor Description.....ES-2
- Contents of Plan.....ES-3
- Uses of the Corridor Management Plan.....ES-4
- Vision Statement.....ES-4
- Whidbey Scenic Isle Way Intrinsic Qualities.....ES-5
- Summary of Transportation Analysis and Recommendations.....ES-6
- Summary of Visitor Experience and Services Program.....ES-6
- Summary of Preserving and Enhancing the Byway.....ES-7
- Summary of Signing and Wayfinding.....ES-8
- Summary of Marketing and Promoting the Byway.....ES-9
- Summary of Action Plan.....ES-10
- Summary of Next Steps.....ES-10

I Introduction

- Overall Purpose.....1
- Corridor Description.....2
- A Typical Drive Along the Whidbey Island Byway.....3
- Whidbey Island Byway - State Scenic and Recreational Highway
and Part of the Cascade Loop.....4
- Contents of Plan.....4
- Uses of the Corridor Management Plan.....5
- Benefits.....6
- Community Involvement.....7

Table of Contents

Completing this CMP is Only the Beginning.....	9
2 Vision Statement and Goals	
Vision.....	11
Goals.....	11
3 Existing Conditions Analysis	
Whidbey Island - The Overall Experience.....	15
History.....	16
Climate.....	18
Geology and Physical Characteristics.....	19
Hydrology.....	20
Vegetation.....	21
Wildlife and Fish.....	22
Demographics, Land Use and the Regional Economy.....	23
Transportation Conditions.....	26
4 Intrinsic Qualities Assessment	
What are Intrinsic Qualities?.....	27
What is Required for National Scenic Byway and All American Road Designation?.....	29
Whidbey Island Intrinsic Qualities.....	29
Visual and Scenic Character Analysis.....	39
Historical Site Commemorative Project.....	40

5 Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations

Introduction.....41

Regional Transportation.....41

Existing Roadway Analysis and Planned Projects.....41

Other Transportation Services and Facilities.....44

Transportation Recommendations.....46

6 Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan for Whidbey Island

Introduction.....51

The Purpose of Interpretation.....52

Central Interpretive Themes.....52

Recommendations for Interpreting the Byway Story.....54

Interpretive Media.....60

Historic Site Commemorative Project.....62

7 Visitor Experience and Services Program

Introduction.....65

A Review of Existing Visitor Services and Facilities.....66

Preserving and Enhancing the Visitor Experience.....67

Emphasis on Stewardship and Education.....67

Whidbey Island Residents are Byway Visitors Too!.....68

Balancing the Needs of Byway Users.....69

The Importance of Multi-Modal Transportation.....70

Recommended Improvements and Enhancements.....71

Table of Contents

8 Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character

Introduction.....75
Summary of Existing Design and Development Guidelines.....75
Recommended Design and Development Guidelines.....78

9 Signing and Wayfinding Recommendations

Introduction.....85
Types of Signs.....85
Signing Recommendations.....86
Implementing the Signing and Wayfinding Program.....90
Compliance with Outdoor Advertising Controls.....92

10 Marketing and Promoting the Byway

Introduction.....95
The Target Market.....96
Marketing Objectives and Strategies.....96
Marketing Strategies and Tools.....98
Other Helpful Information.....103

11 Action Plan

How the Action Plan is Organized.....107
Benefits of the Action Plan.....107
Important Issues and Considerations.....109
Recommended Action Items.....110
Implementing and Updating the Action Plan.....111
Action Items.....113

12 Next Steps: Recommendations for Ongoing Public Participation, Management and Coordination

National Designation.....119
Expanding and Strengthening the Byway Organization.....120
Confirming the Identity of the Corridor Organization.....122
Broadening Interest - Bringing in More Stakeholders.....123
Potential Subcommittees/Focus Groups.....124
The Contact List.....125
Building a Volunteer Support Base.....125
Ongoing Activities.....126
Potential Funding Opportunities.....126
The Importance of Ongoing Public Participation.....127

Appendices

- Community Involvement Tools
- Plant, Fish, and Wildlife Inventories
- Intrinsic Qualities Inventory Matrix
- Transportation Technical Information
- Potential Funding Sources Matrix
- Resources and Reference Materials

We would like to thank the following individuals for all their hard work, time, energy, and dedication on the Corridor Management Plan:

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Executive Summary

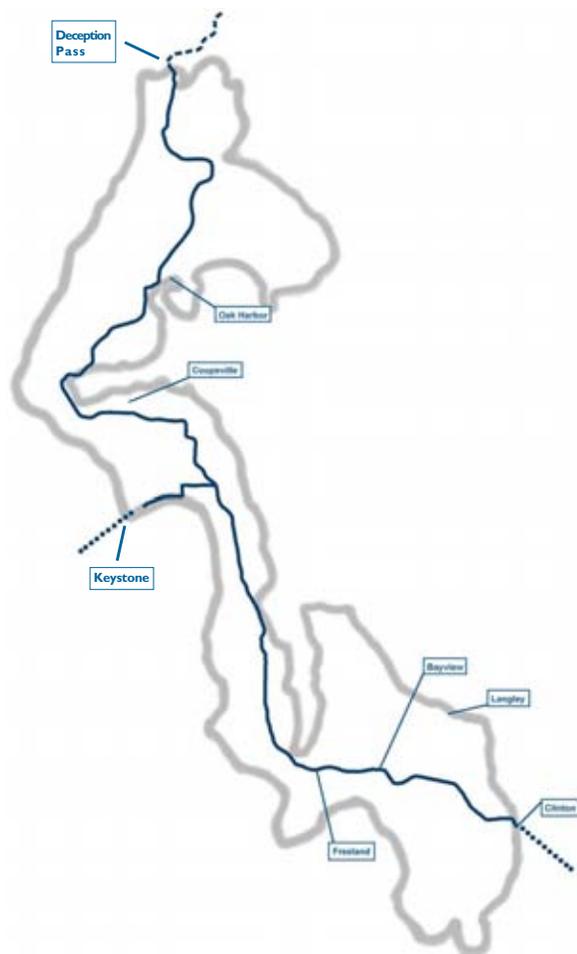


Overall Purpose

This document is a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) created for the corridor and state scenic byway that consists of the state highways (SR-525 and SR-20) on Whidbey Island in the State of Washington. This CMP focuses on a collaborative community and organizational approach to achieve the

goals of preserving and enhancing the qualities of the byway, while accommodating and enhancing the visitor experience. This is done by emphasizing the need for awareness, through education, of the unique settings and environments on Whidbey and the associated stewardship of these elements. To achieve this end, this plan was developed with a healthy respect for

the individual culture and historical heritage cherished by island residents, which was integrated into the efforts of a community-based Steering Committee composed of area residents and agency representatives. Consequently, the plan is the result of a grass-roots, community-driven process that included extensive public involvement. The plan has been developed in accordance with the



Whidbey Scenic Isle Way

Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National Scenic Byway Program guidelines.

Corridor Description

From Deception Pass at the north end of the corridor to Clinton at the south end, and the spur connecting the ferry at Keystone, the corridor's character offers an impressive variety of experiences. Sweeping vistas of water and sunsets, picturesque farmland seemingly unchanged since the nineteenth century, tree-lined stretches of "green canyons," and pockets of bustling commerce greet byway travelers. The highway system itself is an entrenched cultural blueprint that is as much a part of island life as the historic communities it connects. For the purpose of the CMP, the corridor includes areas visible from the highway, as well as recreational sites and destinations either directly accessible from the corridor or located within a short driving distance - in essence, all of Whidbey Island!

The Whidbey Island corridor is the only island byway in the entire country. It is also unique in that it begins and ends over waters of the Puget Sound: the bridge over Deception Pass as well as the ferries providing the "marine highways"—the ferries from Clinton to Mukilteo and

from Keystone to Port Townsend (see map of the byway on this page). For this reason, byway travelers and residents are surrounded by the Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Skagit Bay, Penn Cove, Holmes Harbor, Useless Bay, and other prominent waterways. In the backdrop of the waterways, some of the most impressive mountains and glaciers in the world, including the Olympics, Mt. Rainier, Mt. Baker, Glacier Peak, and other sentinels of the Cascade Mountain range offer dramatic scenery from various vantage points throughout the island. Residents and visitors can appreciate, along with the sweeping views, the serenity of a rural, small town lifestyle where remnants of life from the late 1800s and early 1900s still exist. The byway can be pictured as a large public "parkway" threading together the communities and land along it into a cohesive unit.

Those seeking a fast-paced, drive-through experience will be disappointed. Instead, travelers and residents move on what is known locally as "island time," slowing their pace to enjoy the scenery and to enhance the safety of highway travel. For not only does the byway function to move travelers, it also serves as the ribbon of commerce and connectivity for island communities. One of the few byways in the nation that

is entirely accessible by public transit, travelers will be encouraged to visit Whidbey without their cars and travel around the island via a number of different modes (i.e. bus, bicycle, water taxi, and walking).

This plan for the future of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way provides a critical opportunity to build awareness about the importance of community partnerships, environmental stewardship, and preservation of historic settings. The CMP will become a catalyst for the future, shaping the way residents and visitors relate to the lands and waters of Whidbey.

Contents of Plan

This Corridor Management Plan has been developed to create a vision for the future of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way. This plan uses the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) criteria for scenic byways. The FHWA criteria ensured that a comprehensive, community-driven planning process was conducted to create the CMP and establish a strong foundation for its ongoing management.

This plan includes many elements required by the Washington State Scenic Byway and the FHWA National Scenic Byway programs. In addition to this Introduction, the plan includes the following sections:

- Vision Statement and Goals
- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Intrinsic Qualities Assessment
- Visitor Experience and Services Program
- Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character
- Telling the Byway Story: Interpretive Master Plan
- Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations
- Signing and Wayfinding Recommendations
- Marketing and Promoting the Byway
- Action Plan
- Next Steps: Recommendations for Ongoing Public Participation, Management and Coordination

Together, these components make up a cohesive document to be used to preserve and enhance the byway's unique character.

"...This is a heritage land. This is where the settlement of the Pacific Northwest began.... Here is the root of statehood. Cherish it. Protect it. Pass it on to future generations unspoiled. Let them find the Garden of Eden ... for this is a heritage land."

Cook, Jimmie Jean. Foreword. [A Particular Friend, Penn's Cove](#). By Cook. Coupeville: Island Historical Society, 1973.



Uses of the Corridor Management Plan

It is envisioned that this Corridor Management Plan will be used for the following purposes:

- As a comprehensive description of existing conditions and intrinsic qualities - the description and assessment of these elements provide a basis for developing a unifying corridor theme and implementing interpretive programs that reflect the corridor's rich heritage;
- As a vision that will draw together people from all communities of Whidbey Island, helping to make the plan a reality;
- As a tool that provides recommendations for specific strategies and actions that improve, enhance, and sustain the corridor's unique intrinsic qualities and the many enjoyable experiences it offers;
- As a guide for solving existing problems along the corridor;
- As a resource for future corridor organization(s) to refer to and draw ideas and information from related to potential funding sources, coordination with stakeholders, public involvement,

and project implementation processes and responsibilities;

- As a document that broadly and generally addresses a diversity of interests throughout the corridor – this is a community-based planning document; and
- As a resource for local organizations and a reference for residents and visitors alike to learn about the byway.

Vision Statement

The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way will enhance visitors' experience and preserve the quality of life enjoyed by island residents.

The communities and residents of Whidbey Island are dedicated to the development of a scenic byway plan for State Routes 20 and 525 and the pursuit of projects and activities that:

- Preserve and enhance the scenic corridor along the highway;
- Conserve the environment and open spaces of the island;
- Clarify the identity and qualities of the island that set it apart from other scenic highways and also create both visitor interest and community pride;

- Promote the collaboration and cooperation of communities along the scenic byway;
- Preserve the rural character and way of life for the island communities; and
- Establish a long-term view of the values and qualities that are most important to the island.

**Whidbey Scenic Isle Way
Intrinsic Qualities**

Intrinsic qualities are the important attributes of the byway that make it special – the significant features and places that attract people and also may become the focus of some combination of enhancement, preservation, and promotion. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes six primary categories of intrinsic qualities: natural, recreational, scenic, historical, cultural, and archeological. The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way possesses an abundance of intrinsic qualities within all six categories. In fact, the Steering Committee inventoried over 300 examples on the island. Below is the list of the top 25 intrinsic qualities that the steering committee identified as key to the mission of this plan. The qualities are listed in north to south order.

- Deception Pass State Park
- Dugualla Bay
- Oak Harbor Downtown/ Marina/City Park
- Blue Fox Drive-In
- Fort Ebey State Park
- Fort Casey State Park
- San De Fuca
- Penn Cove
- Ebey’s Prairie
- Grasser’s Hill
- Town of Coupeville
- Crockett Lake
- Keystone Spit/Ferry Terminal & Crossing
- Rhododendron County Park
- Lake Hancock
- Hastie Lake
- Greenbank Farm
- Double Bluff County Park
- South Whidbey State Park/Smuggler’s Cove
- Meerkerk Gardens
- Saratoga Woods and Goss Lake Woods
- Bayview
- Langley
- Maxwellton Beach
- Clinton Gateway/Ferry Terminal & Crossing





Summary of Transportation Analysis and Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to describe the existing conditions, scheduled projects, and proposed future conditions on and along the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way. This section also describes transportation services provided by the Washington State Ferry System and Island Transit, as well as via various multi-use paths and bikeways on the island.

Opportunities for an enhanced non-motorized system are also discussed. In addition, this section includes a list of recommendations for improvements along the byway, including facilities that accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit passengers. Other key improvements focus on the gateway communities of Oak Harbor and Clinton. Some of the recommendations include:

- Seek funding for studies in gateway communities to analyze existing byway traffic patterns and evaluate potential traffic calming and traveler wayfinding opportunities;
- Evaluate alternatives for lane widening, embankment/side slope

design, horizontal and vertical curvature, and other highway elements with the intent to preserve the visual and scenic character of the byway;

- Enforce speed limit – Byway residents and visitors have mentioned that drivers at speeds faster than posted speed limits;
- Promote the “non-driving experience” - you don’t need your car to visit Whidbey Island!;
- Improve park-and-ride lots with the addition of plantings and other aesthetic elements;
- Expand multiuse trail system; and
- Provide safe and convenient crossing opportunities for pedestrians.

Summary of Visitor Experience and Services Program

This section of the corridor management plan assesses existing visitor facilities, as well as websites and information that serve the needs of visitors. This section also provides recommendations for improving these services for both residents and visitors including:

- Gateways at Deception Pass State Park, Keystone, and Clinton

- Comfort station/rest area at Lake Hancock
- Interpretive facilities along the byway
- Wildlife viewing platforms along the byway
- Recreational Pull-off Areas along the Byway
- Interpretive brochures
- Multi-lingual provisions
- Visitor surveys
- Touring routes
- Local resident involvement
- Existing services

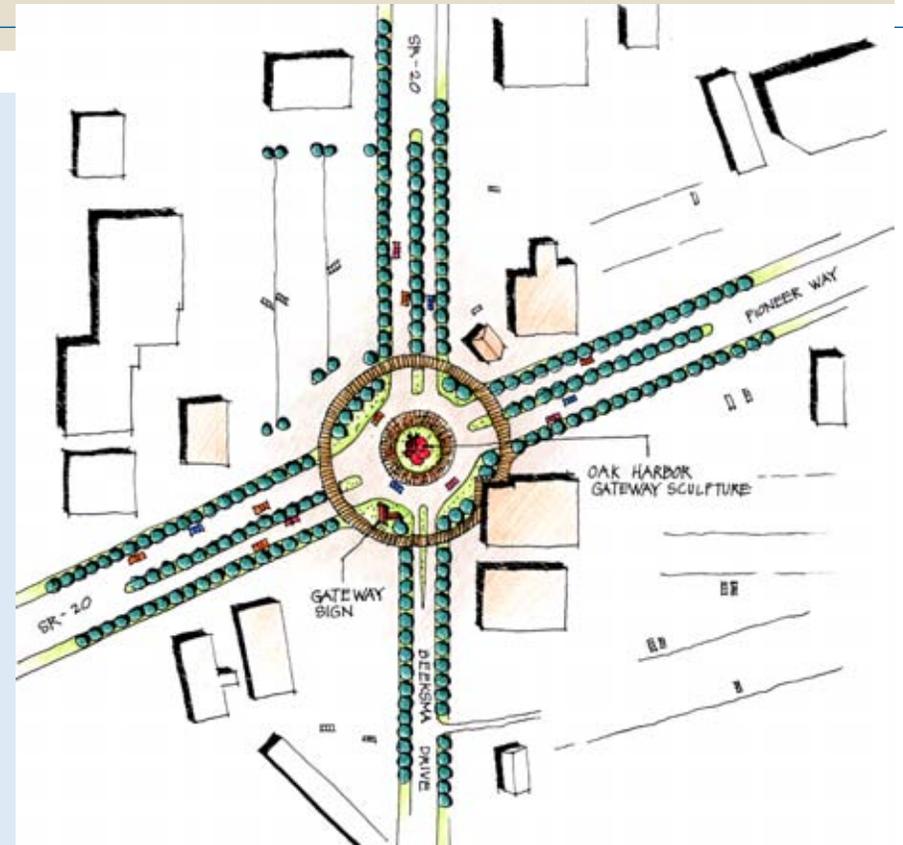
Summary of Preserving and Enhancing the Byway

This section of the plan provides a summary of the existing design and development guidelines in place along the byway as well as suggestions and recommendations for additional guidelines. It is important to note that this section is included solely for the purpose of providing a set of guidelines to retain the byway's character and is not intended to be regulatory. For this reason, there is a strong need to involve residents, property owners, and businesses along the byway in being

“good stewards” of the byway.

Recommendations for preserving and enhancing the byway include:

- Create an “annual awards program” that would recognize property owners, businesses, etc. who help preserve corridor resources;
- Design gateway sign at Deception Pass designed in such a way to reflect the rustic Cascadian style of park buildings constructed during the CCC era;
- Keep structures located along State Route 20 between Deception Pass State Park and Oak Harbor relatively low in height and scale to preserve the beautiful views along this stretch of the highway;
- Coordinate with WSDOT and others to ensure that as much native vegetation



Corridor Enhancement Concept for Oak Harbor



and natural slopes are retained as possible;

- The intersection of State Route 20 and Pioneer Way is a key point along the byway. It is recommended that improvements be made to this intersection to encourage people to travel off of the corridor and into downtown Oak Harbor;
- The corridor through San de Fuca and Penn Cove provides one of the most spectacular experiences of the entire byway. Roadway character should remain similar to its current condition;
- It is recommended that Ebey's Reserve continue to require design review and encourage developers to preserve historical buildings and structures;
- New development in Coupeville is encouraged to be compatible with the historic architectural elements;
- The design of the Lake Hancock overlook should be compatible with the historical architecture of Greenbank Farm;
- Pedestrian improvements should be installed between Freeland and Clinton to provide better connections to transit service on State Route 525; and
- Improvements to State Route 525 through Clinton should be completed to enhance the gateway experience for byway travelers.

Summary of Signing and Wayfinding

This section includes information on existing signage that could be removed, consolidated, or improved while recommending areas where additional signage, such as byway and trail signs, could enhance the corridor.

Developing a unified and coordinated approach to signing on the byway will help reinforce the identity of the corridor, assist the traveler with wayfinding, and minimize intrusions on the scenic values of the corridor. All signs should be easy to read and clearly convey the intended information.

The Signing and Wayfinding Program addresses several types of signs for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way:

- Existing signs along the byway
- Gateway signs
- Scenic byway logo signs
- Directional guide signs
- Supplemental guide signs
- Interpretive signs/panels and historic markers
- Special feature/name place signs

Careful consideration should be given to eliminating redundant informational and directional signs and consolidating signs. Where possible and practical, multiple signs can be located on a single sign post, as long as the information presented still conveys a clear message. As signs are replaced due to maintenance, they should be consolidated where feasible.

All signing located within the SR 20 and SR 525 right-of-way will need to be coordinated with WSDOT.

Summary of Marketing and Promoting the Byway

This section includes marketing objectives, strategies, and specific marketing tools as well as a great deal of helpful information and resources that are available for the byway organization as it embarks upon marketing and promoting the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way.

Marketing objectives include:

- Create partnerships, collaboration, and cooperation between byway communities; and
- Continue relationships with existing efforts to promote Whidbey Island.

Marketing strategies include:

- Promote the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way as the only island byway in the country;
- Promote the byway's intrinsic qualities while educating both residents and visitors on the importance of preserving and enhancing those qualities; and
- Retain the byway committee made up of various groups, businesses, organization, and government representatives.

Marketing tools include:

- Targeting existing visitors;
- Promoting the shoulder season;
- Promoting shorelines, beaches, and marine resources;
- "Leave your Car at Home" campaign;
- Promoting safety;
- Promoting eco-tourism; and
- Developing interpretive guides and maps.

"It's easy to get here, but difficult to leave. The prettiest seaside towns look across the water to mountains lit up in the afternoon sun. Charming shops, deluxe accommodations, century-old farms, lighthouses, big trees, tender mussels, and military history are discovered here."

ExperienceWashington.com
Washington Tourism Council



Summary of Action Plan

The Action Plan of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way contains the following subsections:

- Anticipated Benefits of the Action Plan
- Summary of Important Issues and Considerations
- Recommended Action Items/Action Plan Summary Table
- Implementing and Updating the Action Plan

The following action items are recommended for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way.

Byway Management and Administration Actions

- Obtain funding for ongoing byway support services
- Expand existing corridor organization;
- Partner with local agencies
- Obtain 501c3 organization status
- Confirm scenic byway “brand identity” and develop scenic byway logo
- Reach final decision on pursuing national scenic byway designation
- Implement ongoing community participation program

Byway-wide Programs, Initiatives, and Projects

- Organize and conduct a “Kick-off” event – Spring 2005 Byway Birthday
- Create byway website
- Promote the “non-driving experience” through a brochure and website postings
- Touring routes brochure
- “Walks of Whidbey” Map/Brochure
- Study needed transit facility improvements and develop a master plan
- Safety campaign – speed limit enforcement
- Maintain scenic roadway character through roadway design
- Planting/revegetation projects (native plants) along the roadway; master plan and implementation
- Expand multi-use trail system and improve/enhance access to trails
- Media/speaker’s kit
- Enhance safety at pedestrian crossings
- Reduce and eventually eliminate the use of herbicides and pesticides along the byway
- Develop highway beautification plan for SR 20 and 525
- Sign inventory

- Interpretive guide and map
- Scenic easement master plan
- Informational brochures

Location-Specific Projects (from North to South)

- Dugualla Bay Improvements
- Oak harbor - Traffic calming and wayfinding study in Oak Harbor and subsequent improvements
- Hastie Lake Improvements
- Crockett Lake Improvements
- Comfort Station/Improvements at Lake Hancock Pull-out
- Traffic calming, circulation and safety study in Clinton and subsequent improvements (to SR 525)

Summary of Next Steps

The final section of this plan lists several “next steps” for ongoing byway management and coordination activities including:

- Expanding and strengthening the byway organization;
- Confirming the identity of the corridor organization;
- Broadening interest by bringing in more stakeholders;
- Creating byway subcommittees/focus

- groups;
- Creating and maintaining a contact list;
- Building a volunteer support base;
- Staying involved with ongoing activities; and
- Finding potential funding opportunities.

There are many resources in the community including volunteers, in-kind support, gifts of materials and printing costs, etc. that can be “tapped into” as part of a strong program of community involvement and outreach.





Introduction

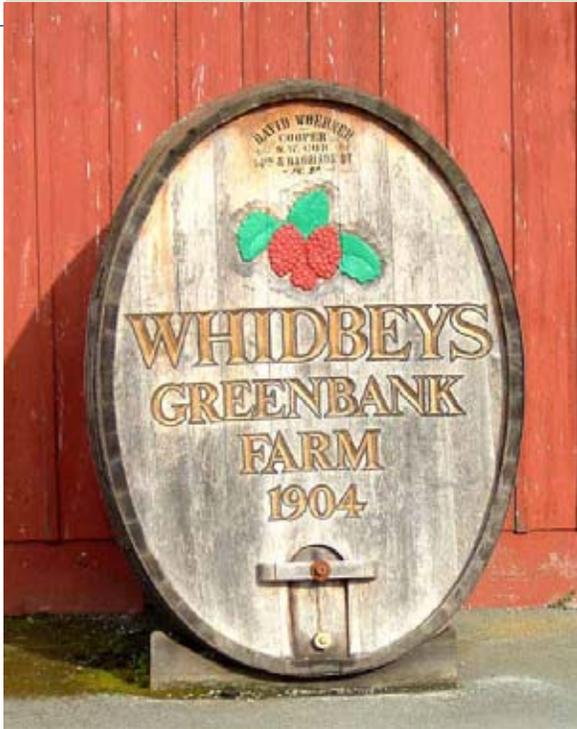


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qualities of the byway, while accommodating and enhancing the visitor experience. This is done by emphasizing the need for awareness, through education, of the unique settings and environments on Whidbey and the associated stewardship of these elements. To achieve this end, this plan was developed with a healthy respect for the individual culture and historical

heritage cherished by island residents, which was integrated into the efforts of a community-based Steering Committee composed of area residents and agency representatives. Consequently, the plan is the result of a grass-roots, community-driven process that included extensive public involvement. The plan has been developed in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's



“And best, though not least of all, there are five thousand enthusiastic persons who are of the opinion that, after all, the garden of Eden never was permanently established on the east bank of the Mediterranean ... but right here on Whidbey Island, and preferably at Greenbank.”

The Westerner Magazine, November 1913

(FHWA) National Scenic Byway Program guidelines.

Corridor Description

From Deception Pass at the north end of the corridor to Clinton at the south end, and the spur connecting the ferry at Keystone, the corridor’s character offers an impressive variety of experiences. Sweeping vistas of water and sunsets, picturesque farmland unchanged since the nineteenth century, tree-lined stretches of “green canyons,” and pockets of bustling commerce greet byway travelers. The highway system itself is an entrenched cultural blueprint that is as much a part of island life as the historic communities it connects. For the purpose of the CMP, the corridor includes areas visible from the highway, as well as recreational sites and destinations either directly accessible from the corridor or located within a short driving distance - in essence, all of Whidbey Island!

The Whidbey Island corridor is the only island byway in the entire country. It is also unique in that it begins and ends over waters of the Puget Sound - the bridge over Deception Pass and the ferries providing the “marine highways”—the ferries from Clinton to Mukilteo and from Keystone to Port Townsend (see

Figure 1.1 for a map of the byway). For this reason, byway travelers and residents are surrounded by the Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Skagit Bay, Penn Cove, Holmes Harbor, Useless Bay, and other prominent waterways. In the backdrop of the waterways, some of the most impressive mountains and glaciers in the world, including the Olympics, Mt. Rainier, Mt. Baker, Glacier Peak, and other sentinels of the Cascade Mountain range, offer dramatic scenery from various vantage points throughout the island. Residents and visitors can appreciate, along with the sweeping views, the serenity of a rural, small town lifestyle where remnants of life from the late 1800s and early 1900s still exist. The byway can be pictured as a large public “parkway” threading the communities and land along it together into a cohesive unit.

Those seeking a fast-paced, drive-through experience will be disappointed. Instead, travelers and residents move on what is known locally as “island time,” slowing their pace to enjoy the scenery and enhance the safety of highway travel. For, not only does the byway function to move travelers, it also serves as the ribbon of commerce and connectivity for island communities. One of the few byways in the nation that is entirely accessible by public transit, travelers

will be encouraged to visit Whidbey without their cars and travel around the island via a number of different modes (i.e. bus, bicycle, water taxi, and walking).

This plan for the future of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way provides a critical opportunity to build awareness about the importance of community partnerships, environmental stewardship, and preservation of historic settings. The CMP will become a catalyst for the future, shaping the way residents and visitors relate to the lands and waters of the island.

A Typical Drive Through the Whidbey Island Corridor

At the northern end in Deception Pass State Park, Washington’s most visited state park, State Route 20 winds southeast through seven miles of forest, pastoral fields, and water views to the island’s largest city: Oak Harbor. Moving south from this city, the highway passes through a small number of working farms and cultural landmarks such as the Blue Fox Drive-in Theater.

Just north of Penn Cove State Route 20 enters Ebey’s Landing National Historic Reserve, the first National Park Service unit in the nation dedicated to honoring

and preserving a cultural landscape. An active program by the National Park Service to purchase development rights is complemented by local efforts to build a strong record of land preservation in central Whidbey. Picturesque landscapes of prairies and working farms welcome travelers along this stretch of the byway.

Next comes the historic town of Coupeville, the Island County seat, and then in a few miles State Route 20 veers toward the ferry landing at Keystone, which offers regular service connecting to Port Townsend on the Olympic Peninsula. Continuing south on Whidbey Island from the SR 20 ferry turn-off, State Route 525 continues the byway route to the south and meanders through a heavily forested portion of the island, which is interspersed with post-war subdivisions only occasionally visible from the highway. This six-mile stretch opens to display wide views of historic





Greenbank Farm on the east and Lake Hancock on the west offer.

South of Greenbank the forest cover resumes and persists as far as Freeland, an unincorporated area with the second largest population center on the island. Between Freeland and the ferry landing in Clinton, State Route 525 begins to travel through a landscape of smaller fields, stands of trees, and neighborhood commercial centers to Langley, Whibey's third incorporated city. It is accessible from three highway intersections along SR 525. As the road nears the Clinton ferry, it drops toward the ferry approach to reveal awe-inspiring views across Possession Sound to the Cascade Mountains.

Whidbey Scenic Isle Way - State Scenic and Recreational Highway and Part of the Cascade Loop

State Route 20 and State Route 525, through Whidbey Island, were recognized as Washington State Scenic and Recreational Highways in 1967. The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way is a unique segment of a larger byway experience known as the Cascade Loop, a 400-mile route encompassing Whidbey Island, SR 20 through the North Cascades National

Park, SR 153 from Twisp to Pateros, US 97 from Pateros to Wenatchee, and US 2 from Wenatchee to Monroe. Figure 1.2 shows the entire Cascade Loop. This corridor is the last remaining portion of the Cascade Loop to complete a CMP.

Contents of Plan

This Corridor Management Plan has been developed to create a vision for the future of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way. This plan uses the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) criteria for scenic byways. The FHWA criteria ensured that a comprehensive, community-driven planning process was conducted to create the CMP and establish a strong foundation for its ongoing management.

This plan includes many elements required by the Washington State Scenic Byway and the FHWA National Scenic Byway programs. In addition to this Introduction, the plan includes the following sections:

- Vision Statement and Goals
- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Intrinsic Qualities Assessment
- Visitor Experience and Services Program

- Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character
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- Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations
- Signing and Wayfinding Recommendations
- Marketing and Promoting the Byway
- Action Plan
- Next Steps: Recommendations for Ongoing Public Participation, Management and Coordination

Together, these components make up a cohesive document to be used to preserve and enhance the byway's unique character.

Uses of the Corridor Management Plan

It is envisioned that this Corridor Management Plan will be used for the following purposes:

- As a comprehensive description of existing conditions and intrinsic qualities - the description and assessment of these elements provide a basis for developing a unifying corridor theme and implementing interpretive

- programs that reflect the corridor's rich heritage;
- As a vision that will draw together people from all communities of Whidbey Island, helping to make the plan a reality;
- As a tool that provides recommendations for specific strategies and actions that improve, enhance, and sustain the corridor's

- unique intrinsic qualities and the many enjoyable experiences it offers;
- As a guide for solving existing problems along the corridor;
- As a resource for future corridor organization(s) to refer to and draw ideas and information from related to potential funding sources, coordination with stakeholders, public involvement, and project implementation processes



Figure 1.2 - Map of the Cascade Loop

and responsibilities; and

- As a document that broadly and generally addresses a diversity of interests throughout the corridor – this is a community-based planning document.
- As a resource for local organizations and a reference for residents and visitors alike to learn about the byway.

This document is not intended to be a plan that creates additional regulations, or restrictions on private property, beyond those that already exist under federal, state, regional, and local plans and regulations. This plan is not a regulatory mandate, but a recommendation based on the hard work of the steering committee members and many community representatives, stakeholders, and interested citizens from all areas of the island.

Benefits

The Policy Board of the Island Sub-region Transportation Planning Organization determined the need for this corridor management plan for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way scenic and recreational highway. The Policy Board created a small-focus group to prepare the application for FHWA funding. The Sub-region Transportation Planning

Organization (RTPO), represents a collaboration between multiple agencies and jurisdictions including: Island County, FHWA, Washington Department of Transportation, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, the City of Oak Harbor, Island Transit, and the Port Districts. As such, implementation of this CMP will be supported by these agencies and ongoing efforts of the Sub-region TPO.

The Policy Board established three directions for the corridor management plan. First, instead of focusing specific efforts to accommodate and enhance the visitor experience to Whidbey Island, the plan gives equal emphasis to measures that preserve the quality of life enjoyed by island residents. This plan proposes a number of ways to preserve the small-town, rural character that has been Whidbey Island's history. Secondly, exploration of and support for alternative transportation modes through the corridor is emphasized in this plan. The popularity of Whidbey Island, as a place to live and to visit, has potential to degrade the very intrinsic qualities that currently appeal to both uses. This plan addresses enhancements of public transportation, facilities for non-motorized travel, and increased park-and-ride options. Finally, corridor preservation will be entrusted to the

citizens of Whidbey Island. Recognizing that each jurisdiction already has the authority to regulate those aspects of the corridor most valued by its community, this plan is aimed instead toward developing a range of non-regulatory options and guidelines. By allowing people and groups to invest in preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor a tradition of stewardship can emerge that will serve the island community and visitors for years to come.

Community Involvement

Byway Steering Community

The Whidbey Island Steering Committee (BSC), made up of about 30 local citizens, stakeholders, agency representatives, and technical experts, worked closely with a consultant team to prepare this CMP in accordance with the FHWA guidelines for corridor management plans. The first step for the BSC was the creation of the vision statement and goals for the corridor. Next, the BSC compiled an inventory of sites that were representative of the six intrinsic qualities that characterize corridor management planning: historic, archaeological, recreational, natural, scenic, and cultural. Members of the

BSC inventoried the sites that were located in the areas of the island where they reside, and the list soon grew to include 300 locations (See Appendix A – Intrinsic Qualities List). Of those identified, 25 of the “outstanding” qualities have been further assessed and reviewed in Section 3 of this Plan.

Concurrently to the intrinsic quality inventory and assessment, existing conditions along the corridor were analyzed. The BSC then sub-divided all the elements of the corridor management plan and contributed their ideas, thoughts, and suggestions for each element of the plan including: design guidelines, visitor experience, interpretive program, marketing and promotions, and signing and wayfinding. Once the ideas and strategies for each element were established, the BSC began developing the Action Plan. The planning process and BSC milestones are illustrated in Figure 1.3.

Community Involvement Activities

Extensive outreach to the island communities took place during the CMP process.

- *Project Information Sheet*
A Project Information Sheet was



“Local residents can be your byway’s best ambassadors - they are aware of your organization’s purpose and initiatives.”

National Scenic Byway Program.
[Making the Grassroots Grow.](#)

1. Introduction

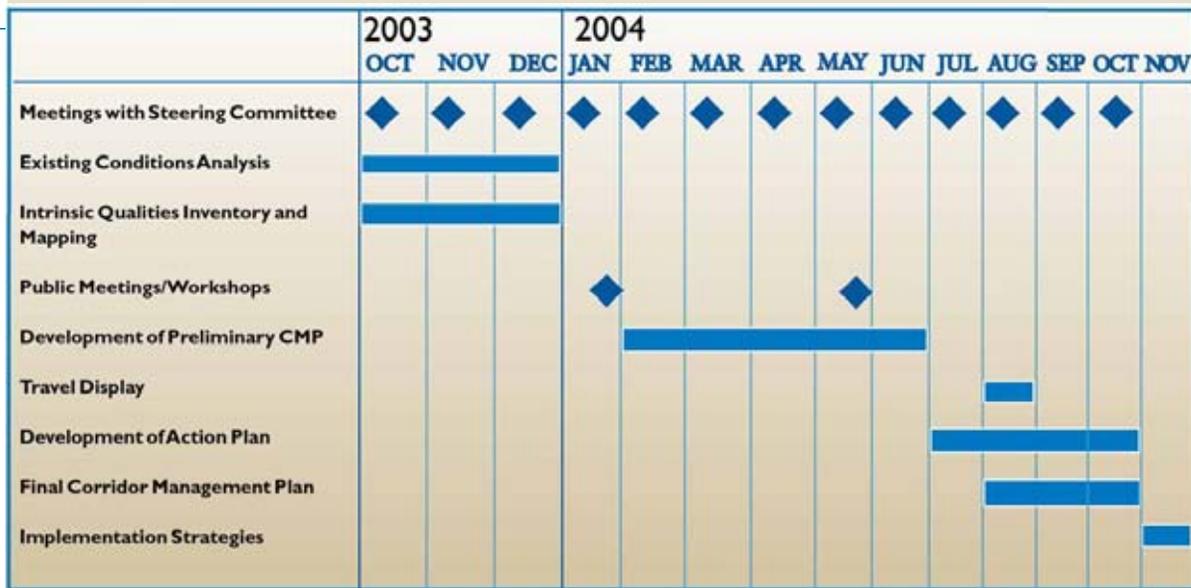


Figure 1.3 - CMP Planning Process and Milestones

created for the corridor and can be seen in Appendix, Community Involvement Tools. The Project Information Sheet was periodically updated to reflect the latest information and progress throughout the CMP process. The first distribution of the Project Information Sheet occurred before the January 2004 public workshops, discussed below. Project information sheets were distributed throughout the island, displayed at libraries, visitor information centers, governmental agencies, and various shops and businesses. An updated project information sheet was distributed

before and during the community open house series in May 2004.

• *Community Dialogue Workshops*

A “Community Dialogue” workshop series took place on Whidbey Island during the week of January 26, 2004. During this week, the consultant team traveled to four communities along the byway, including Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Bayview, and Clinton to gather input and ideas for the CMP.

The purpose of the interactive workshop process was to:

- Build awareness of the corridor planning effort and clarify the purpose of the project;
- Confirm general goals and objectives for the planning process, as well as for the corridor;
- Report on the findings of the existing conditions analysis and intrinsic qualities inventory and gain additional input from the general public;
- Inform the public on the development of strategies to enhance and preserve the corridor’s intrinsic qualities, residents’ quality of life, and visitors’ experiences; and
- Engage the public in the planning process and build support for the project as a whole.

The consultant team and several members of the BSC met with various local agencies and community groups during the workshop sessions. This extensive effort resulted in broad participation and involvement of a diversity of community groups and organizations throughout the island. The meeting notes are in the Appendix, Community Involvement Tools.

- *Corridor Management Plan Questionnaire*

During the workshop week in January 2004, attendees and others interested in the CMP process completed questionnaires.

- *Community Open House*

The consultant team participated in four community open house meetings during the week of May 24, 2004. The open house displayed 15 presentation boards with the draft CMP elements and recommendations. Questionnaires and comments were received during the open houses.

- *Traveling Display*

The Draft CMP was exhibited at various locations in all the communities along the byway. Boards showing the corridor map, photos from the corridor, and important aspects of this plan were displayed. Public comment forms were

provided with a special section inviting people to vote on the byway name.

- *Press Releases*

Press releases for both the community dialogue workshops and community open houses were distributed to all the local media. Copies of the press releases are in Appendix, Community Involvement Tools.

- *Byway Naming Process*

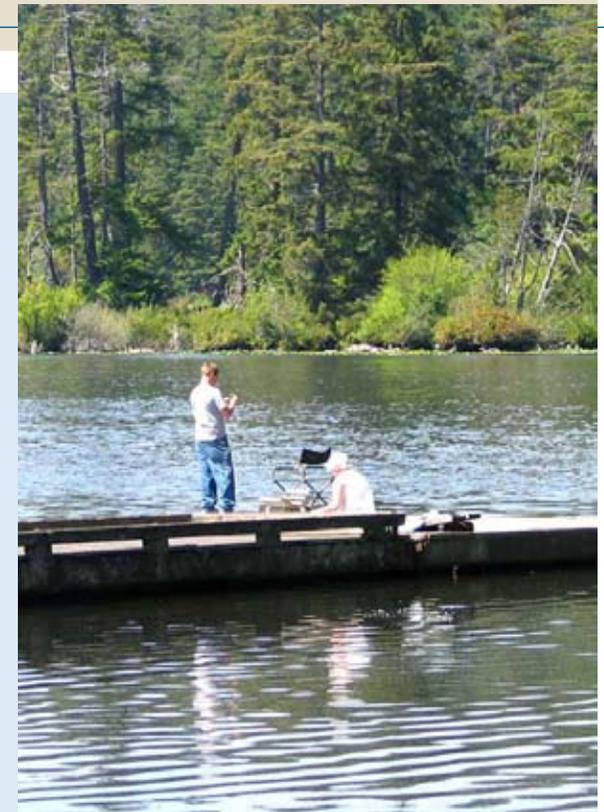
The Steering Committee chose four names for the byway:

- Whidbey Island Scenic Byway
- Whidbey Island Byway
- Whidbey Island Scenic Passage
- Whidbey Island Loop

After the four names were chosen, the process was open to the public input and many creative contributions were offered. The vast majority of public used the name “Whidbey”. The other two words the public offered again and again were “scenic” and “isle.”

What’s in a Name

Based on the input from the public, the byway steering committee had to choose a name. The committee decided it was important to use the word “Whidbey” as it locates us geographically. Scenic is appropriate because the scenery really is



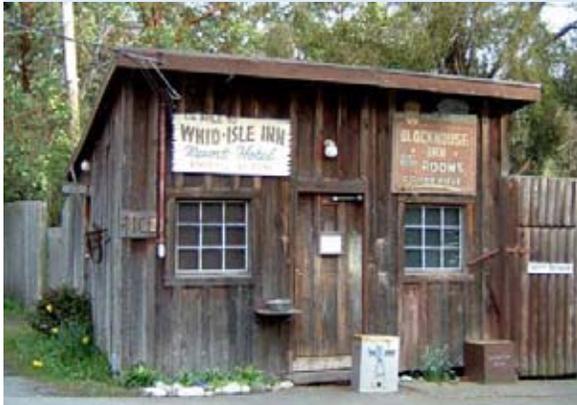
1. Introduction



the most striking thing you experience while traversing Whidbey Island. The word “Isle” appealed to the committee as well. This is an older word with historic and cultural richness.

One thing the committee kept in mind is that they were about to name and designate America’s only scenic byway that is on an island. Whidbey’s byway is uniquely different from all other byways..it is an isle way. The committee chose the “Whidbey Scenic Isle Way”as the byway name.

From a marketing standpoint, this name has a lot of richness and complexity that can be spun off in several directions including “the island way of life”, “island time” or historic connotations and references. Even if people hear it as “aisle way” that would be appropriate considering the corridor-like nature of the byway.



Completing this CMP is only the Beginning

The completion of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way Corridor Management Plan is only the first step toward future planning and management of the corridor. The future of corridor planning and management efforts will evolve over time, but an important next step will be the formation of an expanded corridor organization to carry the vision, goals, and action items forward.

Vision Statement and Goals



Vision

The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way plan offers to enhance visitors' experience and preserve the quality of life enjoyed by island residents.

The communities and residents of Whidbey Island are dedicated to the development of a scenic byway plan for State Routes 20 and 525 and the pursuit of projects and activities that:

- Preserve and enhance the scenic corridor along the highway;
- Conserve the environment and open spaces of the island;
- Clarify the identity and qualities of the island that set it apart from other scenic highways and also create both visitor interest and community pride;
- Promote the collaboration and cooperation of communities along the scenic byway;
- Preserve the rural character and way of

- life for the island communities; and
- Establish a long-term view of the values and qualities that are most important to the island.

Goals

Below is a list of goals developed by the Byway Steering Committee (BSC). These goals provide the basis for the Byway Action Plan, discussed in Section 11. These goals assisted in defining the programs, activities, and projects of the Action Plan.

2. Vision and Goals

"...This is a heritage land. This is where the settlement of the Pacific Northwest began.... Here is the root of statehood. Cherish it. Protect it. Pass it on to future generations unspoiled. Let them find the Garden of Eden ... for this is a heritage land."

Cook, Jimmie Jean. Foreword. A Particular Friend, Penn's Cove. By Cook. Coupeville: Island Historical Society, 1973.

- Strengthen community and agency partnerships through collaborative programs and projects.
- Ensure that the CMP is consistent with applicable local, state, and federal plans and regulations and implement adopted community visions, plans, initiatives, and programs through plan objectives and strategies. (Coordinate with ongoing and overlapping planning efforts.)
- Leverage funding and resources through collaborative planning and partnerships.
- Increase community pride and cooperative relationships between communities along the byway.
- Broaden awareness of the need for preservation, protection, and stewardship of sensitive and unique byway resources and intrinsic qualities:
 - natural environments and habitats;
 - forest and understory that enhance the scenic quality and natural attributes of the byway; and
 - historic settings and buildings.
- Increase business, tax revenue, and carefully enhancing tourism in areas along the byway that can adequately support increased visitation.
- Promote and manage tourism in ways that minimize impacts to citizens' daily routines, traditional cultures, and "island life-styles," as well as to minimize impacts to sensitive natural resources.
- Promote year-round experiences of the byway to travelers to disperse visitation and expand economic benefits throughout all seasons.
- Continue to provide and enhance opportunities for multi-modal travel along the byway (transit access, trails, pathways, etc.). Emphasize safe transit and touring programs as a means for reducing traffic congestion and impacts to resources.
- Enhance views and vistas along the byway and the character of the corridor overall (through vegetation management and development of overlooks).
- Enhance ways to offer citizens and visitors immediate access to undeveloped areas, while also preserving and protecting sensitive resources.
- Expand educational and interpretive opportunities for citizens and visitors through wayside exhibits, historical markers, and other programs and projects.
- Strengthen character and visitor experiences related to gateway communities to the byway (i.e.

- Mukilteo, Clinton, Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Langley, etc.) and disseminate byway information to travelers in gateway communities and at other recognizable locations.
- Enhance visitors' traveling experience (convenience, comfort, safety, etc.) through the creation of additional pull-off areas, overlooks, traffic calming techniques, directional signs information and interpretive centers, restrooms/rest areas, "park-like" park and ride areas, recreation improvements, and other services and amenities.
 - Build a cohesive "brand identity" for the byway; creating a distinctive character of signing, logos, brochures, etc. for the Whidbey Island Byway, as well as blending, where beneficial, with the identity of the Cascade Loop.
 - Develop byway specific promotional materials (driving tours, brochures, videos, etc.)

- Organize and conduct regularly sponsored byway events and celebrations.
- Provide formal opportunities to foster public interest, involvement, and "sense of ownership" in the health, welfare, and success of the byway.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory outdoor advertising and signing requirements. Create corridor-specific design guidelines to ensure that the visible roadside elements along the byway maintain and enhance its unique character, are of lasting quality, and unobtrusive, blending in with the natural environment.
- Restore, maintain, and enhance native plant communities adjacent to the state highways, where feasible.



Existing Conditions Analysis



Whidbey Island- The Overall Experience

The diverse landscapes, historical and cultural resources, and majestic views of mountains and water offer an unforgettable experience for residents and visitors traveling the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way.

From Deception Pass State Park at the north end of the island, to the Clinton Ferry Terminal at the south end, and the short spur to the Keystone Ferry, the

byway serves as a welcome mat to a collection of public and private lands, threading through national, state and county parks, forests, conservation lands, wetlands, working farms, pastures, prairies, rural homesteads, light industrial parks, naval air station properties, urban centers, and small, historic towns and communities.

The byway unites the lives of past and present island residents, and the abundance of cultural, historical, and natural resources they have cherished

throughout time. A journey along the byway is often one of discovery, leading to experiences and destinations beyond the highway corridor. The byway is only the beginning of the experience. Beyond the traveled way, residents and visitors can enjoy a multitude of recreational, historic, cultural, archeological, natural, and scenic experiences on Whidbey Island. Washington icons, including the snow-capped peaks of the Olympic Mountains, Mount Baker, Mount Rainier, and other Cascade peaks, and the brilliant waters of the Puget Sound,

3. Existing Conditions Analysis



Island County Historical Society Museum 2004 Calendar—Native American Heritage: Tribal Influences and History in Island County, photographer and year unknown

“People have lived in Island County for millennia; their history there has been inextricably tied with the islands and the waters that surround them.”

White, Richard. Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980. 5.

Strait of Juan de Fuca, and many bays and coves provide stunning backdrops for these experiences.

The island communities of Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Greenbank, Freeland, Bayview, Langley, and Clinton all have their own unique characteristics including architectural style, cultural events, and historical pasts. Each of these places offers a variety of facilities and services for byway travelers, functioning as important gateways and activity hubs for the corridor.

Whidbey Island’s location within the “rain shadow” of the Olympic Mountains, creates a unique phenomenon of sunnier, drier weather conditions, particularly in the central and north portions of the island. The mild weather makes the island an enticing getaway where visitors can enjoy year-around recreational opportunities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, biking, kayaking, camping, beach walking and fishing.

By looking at existing conditions of the byway, including history, climate, geology, hydrology, vegetation, wildlife, land use and demographics, the regional economy, and transportation conditions, the important resources of the byway can be identified. With this knowledge,

suitable strategies can be developed to preserve and enhance the byway.

History

Whidbey Island showed its worth as a productive and pleasant place to live well before Europeans discovered its advantages. American Indians found that it suited their needs, and the Salish Tribe established several settlements around Penn Cove.

Later, Whidbey Island was among the first parts of Washington State to be discovered by Europeans. Captain George Vancouver’s expedition explored the Straits of Juan de Fuca in 1792. His crew member, Master Joseph Whidbey, is credited for discovering Deception Pass and venting down to examine the shore along Penn Cove. It was Whidbey who named Penn Cove, for a good friend of his. Charmed with the beauty of the island, Vancouver remarked that it reminded him somewhat of a few of the huge estates in Europe, and he was surprised by the amount of game he saw.

The first contact between the indigenous islanders and white men occurred when Whidbey’s party landed in Penn’s Cove. Here more than 200 Skagits stared in rapt astonishment at the white skin of the visitors. Vancouver unbuttoned his

tunic and shirt to show that he and his men were not painted with ashes, as the Native Americans thought. Joseph Whidbey was the first known contact the Snohomish Indians had with white men on the south part of the island, although their land would be visited by trappers during the early part of the 19th century.

In 1848 Thomas Glasgow took up a prairie claim on the western side of the island, not far from present day Coupeville. Intending to settle there, Glasgow planted some crops. It was not long, however, before the Skagits became displeased, and Glasgow, thinking his life in danger, fled the island. Two years passed before there was any other attempt of settling. Then, under the Oregon Donation Land Law, Isaac Ebey claimed the same land Glasgow had abandoned. A month later three more men took up claims on the prairie. Mrs. Isaac Ebey, her children, and another family arrived in 1851. As time passed, more settlers arrived, most of them taking up claims on the prairie. By 1856 seven blockhouses had been built at strategic places for the protection of the women and children during Haida attacks.

Thomas Coupe, a sea captain, took up a claim in 1852 on Penn's Cove, and it was on this property the town of Coupeville

grew. Coupe had the distinction of being the only man ever to sail a full-rigged ship through Deception Pass. In Coupe's time more than one thousand American Indians lived along the waterfront by his claim, a few of whom worked for the white settlers.

The population grew steadily, and by the 1870's there were several prosperous communities. Living was cheap; although imported food was high priced. The cultural growth advanced with the population: more schools and churches were established; lodges and clubs organized; and some communities grew into small towns.

The south end of the island was inhabited predominately by the Snohomish for decades, until the 1850s when adventures begun arriving to exploit timber and fishing resources; and some seeking a place apart from society. The community of Clinton was born in 1875 and continues to this day as the southern gateway access to the mainland. By 1880, a handful of settlers had arrived and become landowners. By 1890s, Langley was established but came under hardship in 1894 when a storm destroyed the town dock. Logging camps employed many people, including a large group of Finnish laborers in Greenbank, most of whom had previously lived in Minnesota.



3. Existing Conditions Analysis



Freeland was originally a Socialist community. Each member of the Free Land Association paid \$10 for 5 acres. The future payments were to come from the profit of the co-op.

At the turn of the century Fort Casey came into being for the defense of Admiralty Inlet. By this time almost all the prairie land was being farmed, and, as logging grew apace, new farms developed where tall timber grew.

Comparative prosperity arrived after World War I. Farms producing grain, cattle, dairy products, poultry, and berries began to come into their own. The Comstocks brought fame and a world's record to Whidbey by raising a record 117½ bushels of wheat to the acre. Selected potatoes, a foot or more in length, were shipped East. A fine bridge took the place of the old ferry across Deception Pass, and a regular ferry service from Mukilteo to Columbia Beach replaced the up-island ferry route from Everett. A large farm for the breeding of game birds was developed by the state.

North of Oak Harbor lies a permanent United States Naval Air Station, Ault Field. Whidbey was chosen because meteorological studies showed sunlight prevailed 75% of all daylight hours, and

favorable flying weather existed 96% of the time.

Today, Whidbey Island has all the charm of the country, yet the facilities of the city. There are few places where the majestic peaks of the Olympics or Cascade Mountains cannot be seen. It is a place of forests, farms, and rail fences, windswept bluffs, sandy beaches covered with drift wood, and hidden corners that whisper of days long past, but nevertheless capturable in the smell of the wind.

Climate

The maritime influence on Whidbey Island's climate creates generally cool summers and mild winters. Average highs during the summer months are in the upper 70s with average lows in the winter months in the mid-30s. The temperature at the northern end of the island differs from that at the southern end by about three degrees. Fog is commonly present from fall through winter throughout the whole island.

As noted above, the climate of Whidbey Island is heavily influenced by the Olympic Mountain "rain shadow" effect, resulting in relatively low rainfall amounts compared to other areas in the

Pacific Northwest. The rain shadow is a result of the mountains interrupting the flow of moist air coming off of the Pacific Ocean. The Olympic Mountains form a barrier that protects the northeastern Olympic Peninsula, the San Juan Islands and Whidbey Island from the heavy rains that move off the ocean.

The average annual rainfall on the island is 25 inches, compared to 200 inches in Forks, Washington, just 120 miles to the west. Rainfall amounts vary on the island, with south Whidbey receiving 30 inches a year on average, and central Whidbey receiving 19 inches a year on average. The Deception Pass area typically receives about 26 inches of annual rainfall. Some precipitation (at least one hundredth of an inch) occurs an average of 139 days each year, and December is the rainiest month of the year. Snow is unusual on the island with 1.5 inches accumulating an average of one day each year.

Geology and Physical Characteristics

At 45 miles long and one to ten miles wide, Whidbey Island is often considered the longest island in the contiguous United States (New York's Long Island may be longer, but its separation from

the mainland by the East River technically makes it a peninsula). The island topography is diverse and includes beaches, bluffs, rolling hills, prairies, and ridges. The island's elevation ranges from sea level at shorelines to 500 feet in the highest inland areas. Approximately five percent of the island consists of prairie lands, and these areas are some of the richest farmland in the state.

Whidbey Island was once located beneath a layer of ice approximately 3,000 feet thick. Three waves of glaciers helped form Puget Sound. When the Vashon Glacier - the last of the these - retreated some 15,000 years ago, much of present day Whidbey Island was still under water. It took another 4,000 to 5,000 years for the island to emerge after the waters of Puget Sound receded.

Whidbey Island soils were formed as glacial ground moraines were dropped over sandy glacial till. The characteristic hummocky surface of a moraine produced the hills and depressions that mark the topography of the island. This is further scarred by the presence of craters, called kettles, which were produced when large blocks of ice buried by the till melted. Today, this feature can be observed at Lake Pondilla in Fort Ebey State Park.

It's a place with a rich if turbulent history. The ice age bore down 100,000 years ago, bulldozing a wide, flat prairie out of the middle of the island and depositing a layer of rich soil, ideal for growing camas bulbs (tubers prized by Native Americans), potatoes, grain, enormous Hubbard squashes and even peas, until the pea weevil devastated the crop during the Depression.

Smithsonian Institution. Destination America: Living Tradition. May 2004

3. Existing Conditions Analysis



Hydrology

Water defines the experience of Whidbey Island located inland sea of Puget Sound. A visit to the island starts with a marine crossing by bridge or ferry. Once there, numerous lakes, streams, wetlands, bogs, and other hydrologic features highlight the diversity of the landscape and its wild beauty.

The west side of the island is bound by the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet, and Puget Sound. The east side is bound by Skagit Bay and Saratoga

Passage. Deception Pass lies at the north end of the island, cutting off the mainland from the island.

A dual layer flow of water occurs between Puget Sound and Admiralty Bay, as freshwater flows on the surface and more saline waters flow on the bottom. The freshwater tends to move seaward and the more saline waters flow inland. Deception Pass, a shallow area, is one example of where these two layers converge.

Several lakes are located on the island,

including Cranberry, Swan, Hastie, Goss, Crockett's, Hancock, Lone, and Deer lakes, to name a few. Crockett Lake is actually a 250-acre shallow saltwater marsh. It is unique in that the freshwater of the lake is separated from the saltwater of Admiralty Bay by a mile long gravel bar, known as the Keystone Spit. Another important lake on the island is Hancock Lake. Once an operational area for Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, the lake now supports a high-quality wetland area, which provides significant wildlife habitat.

Vegetation

Whidbey Island's many landscapes create opportunity for a wide array of vegetation to flourish, much of it visible along the scenic corridor. Trees, including bigleaf and vine maples, alders, ash, Douglas firs, western red cedars, hemlocks, madronas, and other species provide a green backdrop for the corridor. Once heavily forested with mature conifers, the island is still approximately 58 percent forest, although little old growth remains. The stand of old growth forest in Deception Pass State Park is the second oldest stand in the greater Puget Sound lowlands. (The largest old growth stand is located in Moran State Park on Orcas Island [A Road Like No Other]).

Native understory vegetation includes the beautiful Pacific rhododendron and other shrubs such as oceanspray, snowberry, Oregon grape, salmonberry, and red flowering currant. Groundcover along the corridor consists of species such as sword fern, salal, and mock orange. Flat leafed cacti at Partridge Point are particular to the area, and there are many species of wildflowers, including false lily of the valley, yellow monkeyflower, and lupine. Wetland vegetation such as nettles, sedges,

cattails, skunk cabbage, and sphagnum moss can also be found on the island.

On Grasser's Hill, the only community of the Rocky Mountain iris (*Iris missouriensis*) growing west of the Cascade mountains can be found (A Road Like No Other). Whidbey Island is also home to one of three known populations of Golden Indian Paintbrush, which can be seen at Fort Casey State Park.

The island's prairies are significant because they did not develop forest cover; however, cahas, lomatium, chocolate lily, and other wild flowers provide color to these treeless areas. Native grasses found on the island include dune wildrye, velvet grass, yarrow, sand verbena, orchard grass, blue grass, and pea vine.

The variety of native species growing along the corridor is impressive. However, nonnative, invasive species of vegetation do pose problems along areas of the corridor. The Himalayan blackberry is the most predominant of these.

A listing of the plants found on Whidbey Island is included in the Appendix.



3. Existing Conditions Analysis



Photo by Larry Webster

Wildlife and Fish

The abundance of vegetation on Whidbey Island supports a variety of wildlife. A wide array of birds, including shorebirds, wading birds, waterfowl, raptors, and upland and forest birds live and migrate in the area. Warblers, including the yellow-rumped, Townsend's, black-throated gray, and orange-crowned take advantage of the native madrona tree for habitat. Understory shrubs provide berries for birds such as the hummingbird, northern flicker, and American goldfinch. The waters in and around Whidbey Island provide key habitats for a myriad of birds and aquatic species.

Many types of ducks, geese, swans, and other waterfowl species use the wetlands and shoreline for resting during migration, breeding, and nesting. Crescent Harbor marshes provide habitat for the black oystercatcher, an Audubon Society WatchList species. Birds such as the black turnstones, surfbirds, peregrine falcons, merlins, use Penn Cove and Kennedy Lagoon as winter foraging areas. Crockett's Lake and the adjacent agricultural lands near Fort Casey State Park support a large population of permanent and migratory waterfowl. Bald eagles and great blue

herons are commonly seen throughout the area.

The seashore, marsh, and tidal lagoon stretching from Ebey's Landing to Point Partridge, and the dense woods upland, are still minimally impacted by human activity. Thus, they offer safe shelter to black-tailed deer, raccoons, red-tailed foxes, and other common, small woodland creatures. Coyotes, cottontail rabbits, beavers, and additional small mammals have colonized other parts of the island.

California sea lions, migrating gray whales, Orca whales, Dungeness crab, and various other aquatic species live in the waters of the surrounding area. In the waters between Whidbey Island and Port Townsend, the largest species of octopus in the world lurks: the Pacific giant octopus. Another of the world's largest species, the gumboot chiton, lives in the Keystone jetty area (*A Road Like No Other*).

Fish that live and spawn in the area include coho (silver), chum, pink, and Chinook salmon, as well as cutthroat trout. The marine waters adjacent to and within the island are very important for juvenile salmon rearing and migration, particularly pink and chum fry.

Significant commercial and recreational fishery resources exist within or nearby the island. Penn Cove is the site of one of the major recreational fisheries for surf smelt in Puget Sound, and much of the Penn Cove intertidal area is used for spawning.

Shellfish resources in the area are significant. Commercial resources include a substantial subtidal clam bed offshore from Ebey's Landing. The Penn Cove clam beaches are among the most productive in the state, and the mussel culture in Penn Cove represents a major industry for the island.

There are several species that once inhabited the land and waters of Whidbey Island. Remnants of woolly mammoths, including teeth, bones, and tusks have been found along the shoreline and cliffs near Possession Point to Double Bluff. Wolves, bears, and elk also used to live on Whidbey Island.

A listing of the birds, mammals and aquatic species that utilize Whidbey Island is shown in the Appendix.

Demographics, Land Use, and the Regional Economy

Demographics

Whidbey Island is generally defined as three areas: north, central, and south. North Whidbey includes Oak Harbor and the surrounding area. It has a population of approximately 40,000 people (2003). Central Whidbey includes the Town of Coupeville, Island County's seat, and the community of Greenbank and has a population of about 10,600 people (2003). South Whidbey includes the unincorporated communities of Freeland, Bayview, Clinton, and the incorporated city of Langley and has a population of about 14,000 people (2003).

The Communities

The communities that make up the byway are as different in character and culture as the natural landscape that surrounds them. Each community, from Oak Harbor to Clinton, offers a unique cultural flavor.

Oak Harbor is the largest city on the island. In addition to the late twentieth century look of the highway corridor, the city also boasts a relatively intact early twentieth century and interwar main street overlooking the protected bay of



3. Existing Conditions Analysis



Oak Harbor Although Oak Harbor’s waterfront is currently fragmented and disconnected from the “old town,” opportunities exist to create a more inviting community with connectivity and attractive streetscape designs, public art, landscaping, and other amenities. Oak Harbor’s waterfront offers beach access, parks, and a full service marina while enjoying the sweeping views of the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges. Oak Harbor is host to several annual cultural events including Holland Happening, Olde Fashioned 4th of July, and Race Week.

Coupeville is the oldest town on Whidbey Island and the second oldest in Washington. It is the center of the Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, established “to preserve and protect a rural community which provided an unbroken historic record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound up to the present time” (Act of Congress in 1978). Many original structures in Coupeville still exist along Front Street and in the surrounding area. Coupeville is host to a variety of cultural events including the Kite, Logan Berry, Harvest, and Mussel Festivals.

Greenbank is a small community in central Whidbey. Much of Greenbank,

exists today as it did back in the 1800s as a rural, farming community. Greenbank Farm is a unique partnership with working farms, artists, and craftspeople. A cooperative market place supports local farmers and merchants, recreation, and a place for people to gather for special events.

Freeland is currently a vibrant and active community in south Whidbey that was established in the early 1900s as a utopian socialist society. Freeland is a commercial and retail hub that also provides abundant recreational opportunities including beaches, parks, trails, and wetland.

Bayview is not classified as a town, but Bayview Corner is a community hub made up of small local shops, including a garden store, café, and historical community center. Bayview is host to many community events, including a farmers’ market, and gatherings. Several acres of the Bayview Corner are used for recreational activities, including open space, educational trails, and a wetland.

Langley is the only incorporated city in south Whidbey. It is a charming, historic community with a vibrant waterfront and boat harbor, quaint galleries, cafes, and retail shops. Langley also provides

passive recreational opportunities with magnificent views of the Saratoga Passage and Olympic Mountains.

Clinton is an important gateway for travelers to Whidbey Island. Several million vehicles travel through Clinton annually as they disembark at the ferry terminal. Residents have expressed concerns about the speed of traffic and the divisive nature of the highway through the core of the town. Clinton provides many commercial and retail shops for island residents and visitors. Clinton's waterfront is a valuable asset to the community and visitors alike, as breathtaking views of the Olympics, Cascades, and Puget Sound can be seen from nearly every location in the settlement.

Existing Management Plans and Policies

Island County

The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way is located within Island County, Washington. Island County has a comprehensive plan and zoning code.

Island County Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan, adopted in September 1998, contains ten elements:

land use, housing, historical preservation, natural lands, transportation, shorelines, parks and recreation, water resources, and utilities. The Transportation Element is highlighted in further detail in Section 8 – Transportation Systems Analysis. The Comprehensive Plan contains goals, existing conditions, and future programs and projects for each element.

Other Plans

The local jurisdictions along the byway and within Island County include Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and Langley. These jurisdictions have their own comprehensive plans and zoning codes. Design guidelines have also been developed for the Freeland/Bayview area. Ebey's Landing Natural Historic Reserve also has a comprehensive plan that focuses on preservation and management of the rich farm and prairie lands, protection of critical viewsheds, historical buildings, and shorelines, and interpretation of the significant historical and cultural elements that encompass the reserve. The Reserve's Comprehensive Plan serves the mission of the National Park Service, which is to protect and enhance resources while providing a quality visitor experience and serving the needs of the public welfare. Whidbey Island shorelines are



3. Existing Conditions Analysis



Photo by Larry Webster

“Platted in 1881, the town of Coupeville grew quickly into the market and service center of the island.”

Gilbert, Cathy. Reading the Cultural Landscape: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Seattle: National Park Service, 1985. 40.

also protected and regulated through the Washington State Shoreline Management Master Program.

Regional Economy

Over the past two hundred years, Whidbey Island's economy has changed drastically. In the early days of the native peoples, fishing and trading were the primary activities on the island. As the early settlers arrived this shifted to farming, fishing, logging, and hunting. Today's economy is much different from either of these situations, and in September of 1939, 14 months before World War II began, the US Naval Air Operations chose to base operations on Whidbey Island. The Naval Operation continued to grow, and today the Naval Air Station is one of the economic leaders on Whidbey Island.

According to the 2000 US Census, 21 percent of Island County residents (which includes Camano Island) are in the education and health service industry, while 12 percent are in

manufacturing and 12 percent in retail. Other industries, including entertainment and arts, construction, and research, administration, and waste management employ eight percent of Island County residents, while the agriculture industry encompasses 1.7 percent of the work force. 36.9 percent of Island County residents are not employed, and this includes the large number of retired citizens.

Transportation Conditions

The existing conditions of the island's transportation system have been assessed by the Washington State Department of Transportation and Otak. An in-depth analysis of these conditions is included in Section 5 – Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations.

Intrinsic Qualities Assessment



Photo by Larry Webster

WHAT ARE INTRINSIC QUALITIES?

Intrinsic qualities are the important attributes of the byway that make it special – the significant features and places that attract people and also may become the focus of some combination of enhancement, preservation, and promotion.

Typically, when these outstanding resources relate to the highway, the

communities along the highway, and to each other, thereby contributing to an underlying theme or story, the byway may qualify for national designation. Such is the case with the Whidbey Island corridor.

Intrinsic qualities are not just landmarks and activities along the road, but rather the distinctive features that create an overall sense of the corridor's character, history, or culture. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National

Scenic Byways Program defines intrinsic qualities as the *“features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area.”*

FHWA recognizes six primary categories of intrinsic qualities: natural, recreational, scenic, historical, cultural, and archeological. FHWA Policy 5.18.95 describes these categories as follows.

4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment



Virginia planters and New England sea captains colonized the island in the mid-1800s. Many of the prairie houses are even today inhabited by descendants of the original families. Other dwellings, legend has it, are haunted by their ghosts, like the woman sometimes seen to be staring from the downstairs window of the 1853 Coupe House, the oldest in Coupeville.

Smithsonian Institution. Destination America: Living Tradition. May 2004

Natural

Natural quality applies to those features of the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate arrival of human populations and may include geologic formations, fossils, landforms, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbance.

Recreational

Recreational quality involves outdoor activities directly associated with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. Recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive experiences, including, but not limited to, swimming, bird watching, boating, fishing, hiking, and camping. Driving the byway itself also qualifies as a pleasurable experience. Recreational experiences may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the experience as part of a seasonal activity must be well recognized.

Scenic

Scenic quality is the heightened visual experience derived from the viewing of natural and man-made elements of the

visible environment. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable experience. All elements of the landscape – landforms, water, vegetation, and man-made development – contribute to the quality of the corridor's visual environment. Everything present is in harmony and shares in the intrinsic qualities.

Historic

Historic quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or man-made, and that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation of the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling and association.

Cultural

Cultural quality includes the evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural features include, but are not limited to, crafts, music, dance, rituals,

festivals, speech, food, special events, and vernacular architecture that are currently practiced. The cultural qualities of the corridor may highlight one or more significant communities and/or ethnic traditions.

Archaeological

Archeological quality involves those characteristics of the corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The byway's archeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence, have scientific significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past.

What is required for National Scenic Byway and All American Road Designation?

For official designation as a scenic byway, the FHWA requires corridors to possess intrinsic qualities within one or more of the six categories: natural, recreational, scenic, historical, cultural, and archeological. An All-American Road must possess intrinsic qualities in at least two categories.

Whidbey Island Intrinsic Qualities

The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way possesses an abundance of intrinsic qualities within all six categories. In fact, the Steering Committee inventoried over 300 examples on the island. The complete list is included in Appendix A.

Out of the nearly 300 intrinsic quality locations inventoried, key examples were chosen and are described below. In some cases, these locations relate to one another. For example, unique natural qualities of the corridor contribute to the abundance of recreation opportunities and scenic qualities. Historic elements contribute to present-day culture. Figure 4.1 maps all the intrinsic qualities.

Deception Pass State Park

(Historic, Scenic, Cultural, Archaeological, Recreational, Natural)

The dramatic entry to Whidbey Island from the north begins in Deception Pass State Park. This park encompasses the character of the island, thus it is no wonder that it possesses all six categories of intrinsic qualities. Its natural qualities include secondary and old-growth forests including an eight-



4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment



hundred year-old Douglas Fir, the oldest in the park, growing at the Sand Dunes. Other natural qualities include lakes, sand dunes, wetlands, bluffs, marine beaches, and tidal mud flats. Tidepools and a tranquil landscape are found on Rosario Head. A plethora of wildlife is found in the park and the surrounding waters, including birds such as osprey and peregrine falcons as well as animals like whales, clams, and crabs.

Recreational opportunities abound at Deception Pass State Park. Passive activities include wildlife and bird watching, picnicking, interpretive activities ranging from panels to a museum, lectures and slide shows at the outdoor amphitheater, and ranger talks. Active recreational activities vary from boating, fishing, and swimming to hiking, beachcombing, clamming, and crabbing.

Scenic qualities found in the park consist of historic structures, such as the Deception Pass Bridge, incorporated into natural features. Particularly compelling is the western vantage point on the east end of the bridge, as one observes the sheer, forested cliffs plunging into the turbulent waters churning hundreds of feet below its elegant architecture. And while this location defines the park, the mature forests, rocky coasts, islands, and sunsets

over distant mountains are of the essence of this place, too.

Historic structures like the bridge remind visitors of the park's rich past. Instrumental in the development of the park, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built several buildings and park elements in the 1930s that are still used today. These buildings include the interpretive center at Bowman Bay as well as buildings now used as kitchen shelters.

The archeological qualities date back 6,000 years ago during the settling of Cornet Bay. The Samish, a Coast Salish tribe, settled the land and lived in what is now the state park until the early 1900s. In 1792, Captain George Vancouver led the first European explorers into the area, leaving behind nomenclature still in use today.

Dugualla Bay

(Natural, Scenic, Historic)

Intrinsic qualities present at Dugualla Bay include natural, scenic, and historic qualities. The natural landscape provides habitat for wildlife while the surrounding scenery includes impressive views of Mt. Baker. The historic nature of the area is derived from the rich

farming history begun with pioneer families and continued today. It is in this area that a singular culture of managing resources for the use of wildlife and farmers occurs.

Oak Harbor Downtown/Marina/ City Park

(Recreational, Scenic, Cultural, Historic)

Oak Harbor Marina and City Park offer recreational, scenic, and cultural intrinsic qualities to visitors. A turn off the highway on Pioneer Way leads to downtown Oak Harbor, sheer topographical splendor. Downtown rises on a gently slope overlooking a sparkling harbor, with a modern boat marina with 404 slips. Recreational opportunities include sailing access to Saratoga Passage, easy access to the San Juan Archipelago, excellent salmon fishing, walks along the waterfront and beach, swimming, and bird watching. If recreating is not what the visitor desires, beautiful scenery is readily available in views out over the harbor and marina. Piled driftwood is also visible when looking towards the bay and Penn Cove, making a lovely setting for a photograph to remember the area.

Oak Harbor was settled in 1853 by the Irish but also has a rich military and Dutch heritage. Visitors can learn through an A-6 airplane display and a windmill replica. Public art is exhibited throughout the town, including the Lady in Waiting sculpture and a wooden eagle.

Blue Fox Drive-In

(Historic, Cultural, Recreational)

Remember when movies were only ten cents and a Coke was only five cents? Those days might be long gone, but the Blue Fox Drive-In theater remains as a testimony to this past. Adults love the drive-in theater for the memories it evokes, while kids like it for its irregularity. This blast from the past exhibits three intrinsic qualities: recreation, history, and culture. Not only are movie-goers at the Blue Fox Drive-In enjoying a good movie, they are also becoming part of distinctly American history. The Blue Fox Drive-In is one of the only drive-in theaters in Washington and one of only 400 in the United States. This theater provides the opportunity for an individual to enjoy the rural character of the island while also seeing the latest box office hit.



4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment



Fort Ebey State Park

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic, Historic)

Visitors to Fort Ebey State Park witness first hand Mother Nature's impact on the land through their natural, recreational and scenic experiences. Visible within the park are depressions, known as kettles, left in the earth from retreating glaciers. Over time, forests of hemlocks and firs have reclaimed the land, providing ample hiking trails through the forests and along the beaches.

Visitors who choose to hike within the park see first hand the stirring beauty of this forest type, which speaks of the resilience of nature.



Fort Casey State Park

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic, Historic)

In the late 1800s, Fort Casey served as part of the United States' coastal artillery defense system. Today, Fort Casey State Park furnishes visitors with numerous recreational, scenic, historic and cultural opportunities. This state park is a starting point for recreational destinations both locally and within the greater San Juan Islands. Specifically, at the park, visitors can enjoy boating, fishing, hiking, and public open space for more passive activities.

Fort Casey State Park contains perhaps

the most photographed site on the island: the Admiralty Head Lighthouse. Originally built in 1861, the lighthouse was the sixth in Washington Territory. The current building was built in 1903 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. A lighthouse keeper operated the lighthouse until 1922. He was thought to have the most comfortable house in the territory, as he enjoyed an indoor bathroom and laundry room.

Historically, the fort formed a triangular defense system with Fort Flagler and Fort Worden. The purpose of the forts was to defend against hostile war ships entering Admiralty Inlet, the entrance to Puget Sound, and to protect the Bremerton Shipyard. Built with state-of-the-art weaponry, the fort included two 10" disappearing guns. Visitors to the park today can view these guns, the only ones of this type on display in the world.

Although this fort never experienced action, it was used until World War I. At that time, technological advances in warfare rendered the fort obsolete. Military influence on the island continues today, however, with the US Navy base located at Oak Harbor. Visitors to this park can expect to learn about past and present armies in the comfortable setting of a state park.

San De Fuca

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic, Historic, Cultural)

The scenic, historical and cultural attributes of San De Fuca attract visitors year around. This picturesque site is set against the backdrop of Penn Cove. The area was settled in the late 1800s as a farming community, and today it maintains its rural character, offering visitors a glimpse of the past.

Penn Cove

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic, Historic, Cultural, Archeological)

From its natural beauty to its recreational opportunities and its rich history, Penn Cove offers something for every visitor. This naturally sheltered bay provides habitat for wintering birds. Looking closely, one might even see an eagle nesting here. Birds and various types of marine life find shelter in the bay, and shellfish such as mussels have been in Penn Cove for centuries.

American Indians also lived in Penn Cove for centuries. They were drawn by the cove's natural shelter and vast shellfish beds, which provided a staple item for their diet. Visitors exploring Penn Cove can gain insight into this

aspect of ancient American heritage so prevalent on the island.

Another layer of history in Penn Cove includes its function as a port of ocean-bound steam ships from Seattle. The age and breath of experience found in this area illustrates the complexities of life along the coast.

Ebey's Prairie

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic, Historic, Cultural, Archeological)

As a part of Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve, Ebey's Prairie maintains natural, recreational, scenic, and historic qualities. The natural prairie has changed little over the last 150 years, resulting in a tranquil farm setting. Early inhabitation of the area dates back at least 9,000 years. The Skagit Indians first used the land for agriculture and were followed by the pioneers. Today, farming is still an important component of the prairie and of the economy of the area.

Not only has farming survived through the years, but so have the originally built structures. Homes, such as the Jacob Ebey Saltbox built in 1855, still stand today in their initial locations. Other historic locations include the Sunnyside Cemetery, barns, and outbuildings.



"A thousand places in Western Washington could vie for the title of "quintessential Northwest view," the one vista that seems to sum up why this is such a wonderful place to live. Yet there is one place so accessible, so historic, so panoramic and so representative that it perhaps deserves to be first among equals. The bluff trail at Ebey's Landing, in the middle of Whidbey Island, has been balm for ten thousand souls, a Mecca for urbanites seeking renewal."

Seattle Times, [Whidbey Island's Best Kept Secret](#), William Dietrich, June 2004

4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment



Roads, fencelines and hedgerows also remain in the same location; the last 150 years have changed the management of the landscape very little.

Grasser's Hill

(Natural, Scenic, Historic, Cultural, Archeological)

The natural beauty of Grasser's Hill is immediately evident to all those who visit. Only during the summer, though, does the hill's most unique feature reveal itself as a show of rare and unusual wildflowers blooms, including the native iris. The hill resembles a beautiful painting in shades of pinks, purples, yellows, and whites. Raptors and other wildlife also find the hill appealing. Although many cultures, including American Indians, cultivated this hill, the landscape remains nearly unaltered.

Town of Coupeville

(Recreational, Scenic, Historic, Cultural, Archeological)

Established in the 1850s, Coupeville is the second oldest town in the State of Washington. As such, it draws visitors with its medley of recreational, scenic, historic, cultural, and archeological qualities. A walk through Coupeville will not only provide exercise, but it

illustrates the scenic and historic character of the town. Walking down Front Street exposes one to the commercial center of town. Make sure to stop at Town Park, which encompasses almost two acres and features impressive views over Penn Cove. If one still feels like walking, take the steps between Toby's Tavern and the Knead and Feed restaurant to the beach where strolling and beachcombing are available. When tired of walking, stop into one of the many choice restaurants or check into one of the historic lodges or bed and breakfasts for a good night's rest.

For those visitors who desire more in-depth knowledge about the rich history and culture of Coupeville, a visit to the local museum is a must. Here one can learn about the water festival races in the 1920s and 1930s, read about the Coupeville Wharf, and view the Native American canoes on display. Another way to enjoy Coupeville is to attend a bandstand show. Regardless of one's interest, the Town of Coupeville offers something for visitors young and old alike.

Crockett Lake

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic)

Crockett Lake's importance to migrating birds provides recreational opportunities

for visitors interested in bird watching. This lake is one of Washington's most important habitats for shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors during the spring and fall migratory seasons. Its brackish water and salt marsh environment provide biologically rich wetlands that waterfowl need. This environment also provides learning opportunities for people in order that they may understand the role a healthy wetland plays in sustaining flora and fauna.

Besides its natural, recreational, and scenic qualities, Crockett Lake also offers visitors a historical perspective. Old homesteads still dot the area around the lake. The site even reflects some of the military history of the island.

Keystone Spit/Ferry Terminal & Crossing

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic, Historic, Cultural, Archeological)

The unusual land formation forming Keystone Spit exhibits all six intrinsic qualities. The spit was sculpted by glacial forces supplemented by tidal deposition. The resulting soil composition of the spit supports a variety of flora, which adds to the picturesque beauty of the area. Its location affords beach access as well as

opportunities for salmon fishing. Historically, the spit was developed as a result of the building of Fort Casey; located here was the quartermaster dock, which serviced the fort. The US Corps of Engineers eventually built the Keystone Jetty and harbor in the 1950s. This enabled ferry service across to the Olympic peninsula, which still operates today. The Keystone Spit is owned by Washington State Parks and Recreation, which preserves the land in its natural state. This ferry crossing offers one of the most striking panoramas in the nation.

Rhododendron County Park

(Natural, Recreational, Scenic)

Rhododendron County Park offers visitors natural, recreational and scenic qualities. Native vegetation flourishes in this park, demonstrating the various native species of the island. The key to the luxuriant growth of the rhododendrons is the 'rain shadow' affect produced by the Olympic Mountains protecting much of Whidbey Island from the heavy rains typical of the Pacific Northwest. As a result, the rhododendrons are able to compete with other species. For visitors who would like to experience the rhododendrons up close, hiking and camping opportunities



4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment

exist.

Lake Hancock

(Natural, Scenic, Cultural)

Natural, scenic and cultural qualities abound at Lake Hancock although they can only be viewed from a distance. The public is not permitted access to Lake Hancock, because the area was once used as an operational area for the US Navy. The Navy still owns the land but has

agreed to preserve the land as wildlife habitat. Visitors can enjoy the beautiful views of the lake and the sound, however, from a vantage point. Other views include those of the natural bog, a delicate environment shaped by glaciers and subsequent geologic activity over thousands of years.

Hastie Lake

(Natural, Scenic)

Hastie Lake serves is one of the flourishing wildlife habitats on the island. Consequently, in encompasses several natural and scenic jewels and one of the largest wetland along the byway. As one of the few freshwater bodies on the island, it attracts a diversity of wildlife, including flocks of birds, during the fall and winter months.

Greenbank Farm

(Historic, Recreational, Cultural, Natural, Scenic, Archeological)

The goal of the Greenbank Farm includes preserving the farm as a “living-history farm, scenic recreation site, and cultural community center”

(www.greenbankfarm.com/history.cfm).

As a result, this site shines as an example of natural, recreational, scenic, historic, and cultural qualities. From the road and the farm itself, amazing panoramic views await the visitor. Trails exist for those who choose to see the farm from a variety of angles, and there are also wetlands and bird watching platforms on the farm.

The farm began as a dairy in the early 1900s but quickly turned to berry farming. In 1972, the farm held the distinction of the largest loganberry farm



in the United States. A retail shop of Chateau Ste. Michelle operated on the farm for a time, and then Island County purchased the farm. Currently, the farm is reintroducing organic farming methods. Users and visitors to the farm enjoy seasonal u-pick crops, certified organic farm land leases, community pea patches, and research and education opportunities. A retail shop in the red barn showcases the Greenbank Farm product line as well as wine tasting and selling and food service.

Cultural events occur often at the farm. Among them include receptions, meetings, classes, and workshops. The Loganberry Festival takes place every July, bringing tourists in from far and wide. Local produce, crafts, art, and food is available at the year round market. With all these activities available, regardless of the season, it is easy to understand why the Greenbank Farm is loved by Whidbey Island residents.

Double Bluff County Park

(Scenic, Recreational, Natural)

With its two miles of publicly owned beach access, Double Bluff County Park affords recreational and scenic qualities to visitors. Recreational activities include clamming, hiking, kite flying, and

picnicking. With the expanse of beach access, views out across the water are phenomenal.

South Whidbey State Park/ Smuggler's Cove

(Scenic, Recreational, Natural, Historic)

South Whidbey State Park offers a diverse system of natural, recreational, scenic, and historic qualities. Within the park is the Classic U Forest, one of two old growth forests remaining on Whidbey Island. The "Ancient Cedar" is a breathtaking example of the beauty, and consequent value, of old growth. The Hobbit Trail provides for an exciting short interpretive trail, intriguing for all ages. An amphitheater allows for multimedia presentations as well as nighttime lighting for those infamous campfire ghost stories. Tidelands lend themselves to activities such as fishing, beachcombing, and picnicking. Whether hiking through the forests or enjoying the scenic panoramas across the water, South Whidbey State Park is a thrilling place to explore.

Meerkerk Gardens

(Scenic, Recreational, Natural, Cultural)

On Mother's Day families spread blankets on the lawn of Meerkerk, listen



4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment



to the guest musician perform, and drink in the colors of thousands of rhododendrons. Founded in the 1970s, the non-profit gardens cover ten acres within a 43-acre woodland preserve. Besides rhododendrons, the blooms of bulb flowers, perennials, and flowering trees scent the air for

visitors who may wander the paths in the garden and preserve or shop at plant sales held in the spring and summer months.

Saratoga Woods and Goss Lake Woods

(Scenic, Recreational, Historic)

During the early settlement of the west, the United States government mandated that tracts of land be set aside in trust for the support of local public schools. These lands on Whidbey Island were logged in the early twentieth century. Today, the forests have grown again, and volunteers have built trails for hiking, biking, birding, and riding throughout

over 600 acres of the preserve and some portions of private property. These woods are home not only to many animals, but also a huge glacial erratic known as Waterman Rock.

Bayview

(Historic, Cultural)

Every Saturday morning in spring, summer, and fall farmers, gardeners, bakers, and artists gather, in the Bayview hall or outdoors, to sell their products at the Bayview Farmer's Market. This hall was built in the 1920s to accommodate community and social events, and it still functions as a gathering place today. Down the road from the hall stands the Bayview Cash Store, which was built in 1924 and rebuilt in 1999 to house several businesses and a community meeting room. Bayview also holds the distinction of being the location of one of the first schools built on Whidbey Island. Formerly the elementary school, today the building houses an alternative high school.

Langley

(Historic, Recreational, Scenic)

For one weekend in February, Langley is plunged into crime and intrigue as

citizens host their annual “Mystery Weekend.” After the criminal is apprehended, one may visit Seawall Park and look for whales or gaze across Saratoga Passage at Mt. Baker. The town is also filled with fine restaurants, art galleries, inns, bed and breakfasts, historic residences, and a winery.

Maxwelton Beach

(Historic, Scenic, Recreational, Cultural, Natural)

Maxwelton was the last unsettled spot on Whidbey Island and was only christened in 1905 upon the arrival of its founders—the Mackie brothers. In spite of its late start, Maxwelton was the site of the first Northwest Chautauqua in 1912 and, in that same year, began hosting an annual Fourth of July Parade, which has continued every year since, except during World Wars I and II. The beach in Maxwelton fronts Puget Sound and houses a public boat launch and the Dave Mackie County Park.

The Maxwelton Salmon Adventure is a community effort to rehabilitate the Maxwelton Watershed for salmon spawning while maintaining the land for agriculture. Area residents and school children began the effort in 1993 and have since purchased land and built an outdoor classroom.

Clinton Gateway/Ferry Terminal & Crossing

(Historic, Scenic, Recreational, Cultural)

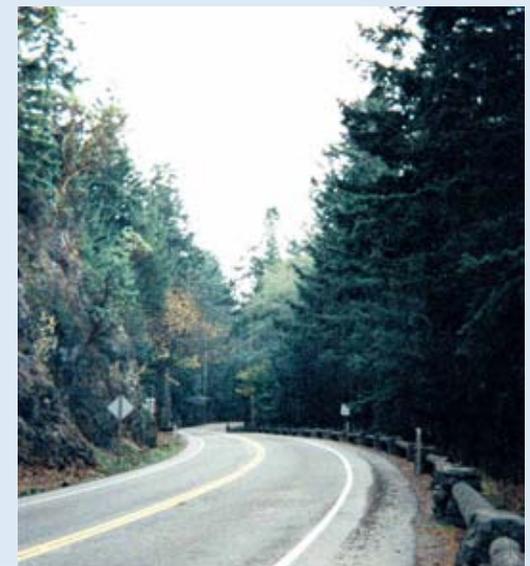
The southern entry to the byway begins with a ferry crossing and arrival at Columbia Beach in Clinton, offering scenic, historic, cultural, recreational, and natural attributes. Whether on the ferry crossing feeding the accompanying seagulls, or at the Clinton Landing, the views are spectacular. They include Mt. Baker to the north, east to the Cascades, south to Mt. Rainier, and west to the bluffs and shoreline of Clinton. The ferry terminal area is an excellent venue for telling Clinton’s history, including its history as a entry point to Whidbey Island.

Visual and Scenic Character Analysis

The scenic resources of Whidbey Island perhaps represent the byway’s most important and dominant intrinsic quality. The exceptional views and vistas and the changing character of the scenery throughout the island are the heart of the byway experience. The existing mood of the byway is defined by the landscape that surrounds and encompasses the highway corridor. Like the nature of Whidbey Island, the

“Many people credit the growth of Maxwelton to the arrival of the charismatic Mackie brothers and their large families in 1905. As they learned to till the land, the Mackies joined hands with existing settlers to build homes and barns. They also took an active role in convincing people from Seattle to buy land and settle in this last frontier of Whidbey Island.”

Linnea, Ann. [A Journey Through the Maxwelton Watershed: A Natural and Social History](#). Whidbey Island: Maxwelton Salmon Adventure, 2002. 37.



4. Intrinsic Qualities Assessment

roadway varies throughout its entire length.

A “windshield” visual and scenic character analysis was completed for the entire byway corridor, recording northbound and southbound observations of scenic character. The purpose of this analysis was to identify locations where outstanding and exceptional views and scenic qualities exist, as well as locations where buffering and screening may be most needed and/or where voluntary architectural design guidelines could help to improve the visual quality.

Figure 4.2 depicts the preliminary results of the visual and scenic character analysis for the byway. The map includes the southbound/west side of SR 20 and SR 525 and the west north side of the SR 20 byway spur to the Keystone Ferry and the northbound/east side of SR 20 and SR 525 and the south portion of the SR 20 byway spur. The visual character categories are displayed through a color coding system:

Red – Urban development areas - in some cases these areas include visual clutter and architectural style and character that is not visually cohesive to a scenic byway experience, meaning that the visible elements do not necessarily blend well with the surrounding

landscape or with the context or setting;

Orange – Suburban or rural pockets of development dotted between forests, farms, or open land that in some cases are not visually cohesive to a scenic byway experience;

Yellow – Urban, suburban, or rural development that is visually cohesive with a scenic byway experience and blends well with the surrounding context and landscape;

Green –Forested corridor, areas of “green canyons” - tree-lined, enclosed views;

Turquoise – Rural, open areas with territorial views of farmland, rolling hills, and prairie landscapes with forests in the backdrop;

Blue – Rural, open areas with broad views of farmland, rolling hills, and prairie; landscapes with forests, water or mountain views in the background; or unique habitat including wetlands and marshes in view; and

Purple – The highest quality scenic experience - open areas with exceptional broad views of the surrounding landscape and with water and mountains in the viewshed and, in some cases,

interesting elements such as historic barns (big red barns) and structures, or unique landscapes in the viewshed.

Historic Site Commemorative Project

An important project related to commemorating historic sites with markers is underway on Whidbey Island. This project is described in more detail in Section 6, Telling the Byway Story.



Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations



Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions, scheduled projects, and proposed future conditions on and along the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way. This section also describes transportation services provided by the Washington State Ferry System and Island Transit, as well as via various multi-use paths and bikeways on the island. Opportunities for an enhanced non-motorized system are also discussed.

Regional Transportation

Whidbey Island is accessed by two ferries and one roadway. State Route 20, via the Deception Pass bridge is the only roadway to Whidbey Island. The other accesses include a ferry from Port Townsend on the west side and from Mukilteo on the south end. Figure 5.1 depicts a map of travel routes to Whidbey Island, including regional connections to Interstates 5 and 405.

Existing Roadway Analysis and Planned Projects

The roadway review and highway design and maintenance standards element of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way Corridor Management Plan describes the existing conditions, scheduled projects, and proposed future conditions on and along the portions of State Routes (SR) 20 and 525 traversing Whidbey Island. The review examines elements of roadway

5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations



Figure 5.1 - Regional Connections to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way

design such as functional classification, roadside development, horizontal and vertical alignment, lane and shoulder widths, the provision of clear zones, and level of access control. All these components play a major role in the operation of a highway. In addition, the report briefly discusses structures (bridges), channelization, signalization, and speed limits. These components are only discussed briefly in this section. A full report is included in the Appendix.

Highway Designations

The highways we now know as SR 20 and SR 525 on Whidbey Island were originally added to the state highway system in 1937 as Secondary State Highway 1-D (SSH 1-D). In 1964 the main trunk of SSH 1-D extending the length of Whidbey Island between Clinton and Deception Pass was redesignated as SR 525, and the 3.4 mile branch extending from the trunk to the Keystone ferry terminal was redesignated as SR 113. In 1973 SR 113 from the Keystone ferry terminal to the main highway trunk, and the portion of SR 525 from the intersection with SR 113 north to the Deception Pass Bridge and on into Skagit County was redesignated as SR 20.

State Routes 20 and 525 were named Washington State Scenic Byways in 1967. In 1978 they became part of the Cascade Loop Scenic Highway Association, linking Whidbey Island's Scenic highways with The North Cascades Scenic Highway, the Methow Valley, the Okanogan, and the Stevens Pass Greenway in a spectacularly diverse 440 mile necklace of state scenic byways.

SR 20 and SR 525 are part of the National Highway System (NHS), meaning they function as part of an interconnected system of principal arterial routes that serve interstate and interregional travel; they meet the national defense requirements; and they serve major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, other intermodal facilities, and other major travel destinations. SR 20 and SR 525 are also designated as part of the Strategic National Highway Network (STRAHNET), as they link important military facilities to the NHS.

Roadside Classification

The WSDOT Roadside Classification Plan (RCP) is a policy tool used to coordinate and guide the management of Washington State Highway roadides, including planning, design, construction

5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations

and maintenance activities. The intent of the plan is to provide a uniform framework for consistent, proactive roadside management statewide, and to facilitate cost-effective restoration of state roadsides. The RCP provides guidelines for roadside restoration, and it advocates the use of native plants, Integrated Vegetation Management, and a long-term management approach to achieve sustainable roadsides. For more information on Roadside Classification, see Appendix.

Access Control / Access Management

SR 20 and SR 525 are controlled access facilities. Most of the corridor is in the Managed Access category with partial Limited Access established at several locations. See Transportation Report in the Appendix for the controlled access classifications for all of SR 20 and SR 525 on Whidbey Island.

Pavement Conditions

The majority of the highway pavement on SR 20 and SR 525 is in good condition. Approximately 80% of the highway has been paved within the past 10 years. See Appendix for pavement projects planned and scheduled for years 2004 to 2008.

Bridge Structures

There are four bridge structures in the Whidbey Island highway corridor, most notable of which are the historic and scenic Deception Pass Bridge and Canoe Pass Bridge, both built in 1935. The Appendix includes a list of the highway bridge structures on Whidbey Island.

Speed Limits

Nearly 90 percent of the 51-mile Whidbey highway corridor has posted speed limits of 50 to 55 mph traversing mostly winding and undulating rural countryside. In the Clinton commercial area, and the approach to the Clinton ferry dock, SR 525 speeds are reduced to between 30 and 40 mph. In the vicinity of the Keystone ferry landing the posted speed on SR 20 is 25 mph. Posted speeds are also reduced to between 30 and 40 mph on SR 20 through the commercial area of the City of Oak Harbor and again through Deception Pass State Park lands and the Deception Pass Bridge. See Appendix for a complete list of speed limit postings for SR 525/SR 20.



The name "Deception Pass" derived from Captain Vancouver's realization that what he had mistaken for a peninsula was actually an island. He named that island "Whidbey" in honor of his assistant, Joseph Whidbey, who was at his side when Vancouver realized the mistake. The captain named the inlet at which he was anchored "Deception Pass" to commemorate the error.

Washington State Park website

5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations



Other Transportation Services and Facilities

The Whidbey Island corridor is unique in that it is one of the few byways in the nation that can be accessed entirely by travel modes other than automobile via the Washington State Ferry System, Island Transit, and various trails and pathways throughout the island.

Washington State Ferries

There are two ferry routes that provide access to Whidbey Island. Both are part of the “marine highway” system. The Washington State Department of Transportation’s Marine Division operates the Mukilteo to Clinton and the Port Townsend to Keystone ferries. According to Island County’s Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, ferry usage had been steadily increasing since 1986. Total ridership on the Mukilteo-Whidbey Ferry was 4,215,400 (1996) and total ridership on the Port Townsend to Whidbey Ferry was 842,300 (1996).

The Mukilteo to Clinton ferry makes about 40 trips per day at 30 minute headways and carries 130 vehicles. The Port Townsend to Keystone ferry makes 8-10 trips per day in the winter at 90 to

109 minute headways and 20 trips per day in the summer at 45 to 75 minute headways and carries 75 vehicles.

Other Water Transportation Opportunities

Several parks on Whidbey Island offer kayak docking and camping opportunities as part of the 140-mile Cascadia Marine Trail. The Cascadia Marine Trail is one of only 16 designated National Millennium Trails.

Island Transit

Island Transit has been providing public transportation services for Island County, which includes both Whidbey and Camano Islands, since 1987. These services include Fixed Route, Route Deviation, Feeder Route, Complementary Paratransit, Bike & Ride, and a very successful Vanpool and Rideshare Program. Service is offered throughout all of Whidbey Island Monday through Saturday. Eight Park & Ride lots are located along State Route 20 and State Route 525, with connections from the ferry terminals to all communities along the byway. Residents and visitors can enjoy a non-motorized experience for the entire length of the byway.

5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations

Island Transit's Mission and the Fare Free Philosophy

As Island Transit's mission states, it is the transportation provider's goal to provide a package of ride-sharing services which emphasizes rider use, safety and satisfaction, and results in increased mobility opportunities, less dependence on the automobile, decreased traffic congestion and improved air quality for all people in the service area, riders and non-riders alike.

Island Transit's Board feels that charging a fare is contrary to the mission. Typically, for smaller or rural transit systems, collecting a fare generates virtually no usable revenue because of the costs associated with the collection. In addition, the farebox imposes an unnecessary inconvenience which is detrimental to ridership, and therefore contrary to the mission. Island Transit is currently 100% pre-paid with 6/10ths of 1% local sales tax, and ridership has grown from 13,024 in 1987, to over an amazing 1,004,267 annually.

Multimodal Transportation Options

Island Transit riders can utilize public transportation wherever they need to go in Washington State and beyond

without once setting foot in an SOV (single occupancy vehicle). An Island County resident, or anyone visiting Island County, can take an Island Transit bus to make various multimodal connections to the Washington State Ferry system, other transit agencies, rail and airporter shuttles. Immediate connection destinations include: Everett, Seattle, Port Townsend, Anacortes / San Juan Islands, Mt. Vernon and International connections into Canada - the routes and possibilities are endless!

Routes

Island Transit has many routes that serve Whidbey Island. Figure 5.2 depicts all the transit routes.

The Island County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element - Bike and Pedestrian

The Transportation Element of the Island County Transportation Plan outlines additions to the existing multi-use trails, bike routes, and pedestrian trails in the county.

The Comprehensive Plan also outlines important elements that should be considered when planning and designing new pedestrian and bicycle facilities. See Appendix for a complete list.



5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations



Transportation Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations for gateway communities, highway improvements, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities to improve overall transportation for byway travelers.

Gateway Community Design and Traffic Calming Studies

- The gateway communities of Oak Harbor and Clinton should work with the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, WSDOT, and others to seek funding for separate studies to analyze existing byway traffic patterns and evaluate potential traffic calming and traveler wayfinding opportunities. Traffic calming, in particular, is a stated need within these communities.
- Clinton community representatives should meet with WSDOT regional representatives to coordinate on the status of past planning efforts and proposed projects.
- Oak Harbor representatives should meet with WSDOT regional representatives to coordinate on proposed projects and improvements within proximity to the city.
- Analysis of traffic calming opportunities and appropriate

solutions for other important hubs and pedestrian activity areas along the byway should also be completed.

Highway Improvements

There are a number of improvements related to the highway that could be considered as projects or programs in the Action Plan that would enhance byway travelers' experiences:

- Maintaining scenic character of roadway through cooperative design processes with byway representatives (much like the current process involving design of highway realignment in the Ebey's Landing Historical Reserve). Evaluation of alternatives for lane widening, embankment/side slope design, horizontal and vertical curvature, and other highway elements with the intent to preserve the visual and scenic character of the byway should be a priority to all interests involved. Maximum efforts to preserve existing scenic, historic, cultural, archeological, and natural features along the byway should be integrated into all highway improvement design solutions.
- Bring the plantings to the roadway edge: appropriate native vegetation should be planted and maintained up to the roadway edge. Current cooperative efforts between WSDOT and the

5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations

various organizations on the island related to the design and maintenance of the vegetated edge of the highway should continue.

- Alternate off-byway tour routes should be encouraged and promoted to the extent appropriate and acceptable to local residents. See Figure 5.3 for recommended touring routes. These routes will offer the byway traveler a chance to experience more of the island's natural and historical beauty. This could potentially decrease traffic on the main byway corridor, as well.
- Speed limit enforcement – Byway residents and visitors have mentioned that drivers are often traveling at faster than posted speed limits. This is of particular concern in residential and urban areas where pedestrians frequently cross the byway, but also of concern throughout the entire byway, which is a designated bike route. Enforcement of speed limits will allow people to enjoy “island time” and experience the byway at the posted speed limits.
- Traffic calming measures - as mentioned above, suitable traffic calming opportunities and solutions should be considered for the gateway communities and at other activity hubs along the byway (park and ride lots, pedestrian crossings, etc.) A focused

design workshop with WSDOT staff and involving representatives from the local communities could help to define potential ideas.

- Establishing a cooperative program with business and property owners along the byway to allow for all to participate in scenic byway projects, assisting with designs and vegetation management and scenic improvements.

Water Related Transportation Recommendations

There are opportunities to provide “water taxi” service around the island. Langley, Coupeville, and Oak Harbor are port cities that could offer taxi services for both residents and visitors. Taxis could be small boats with carrying capacity for 20 passengers including room for bicycles and other gear.

There are also opportunities for additional kayak camping sites along the Cascadia Marine Trail. Camp site



5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations

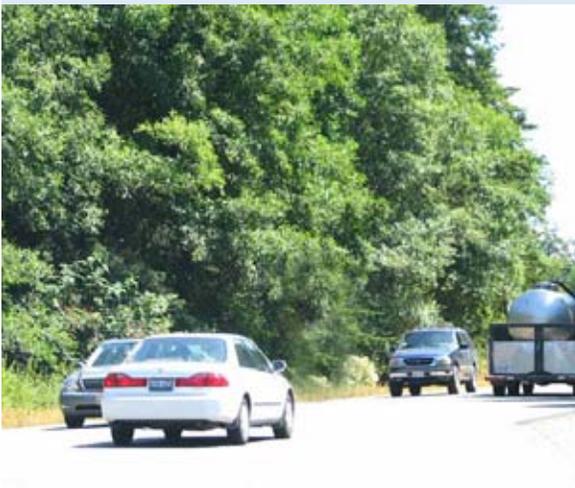


locations could be identified throughout the island. There could be opportunities for kayakers to dock in one the communities and stay at a local bed and breakfast. Secure kayak storage would need to be available.

Transit Recommendations

There are a number of transit improvements that could be considered projects or programs in the Action Plan that would enhance byway travelers' experiences:

- Promoting the “non-driving experience” - you don't need your car to visit Whidbey Island! Local chambers of commerce and tourism organizations should team with Island Transit to promote, educate, and encourage the non-driving experience “Whidbey Island Experience – “Leave Your Car at Home.”
- Sunday service – Many travelers come to Whidbey just for the weekend. Adding Sunday service would allow them the opportunity to use transit all weekend long. Locals would benefit from Sunday service to access trailheads and recreational opportunities. Island Transit will continue to seek and obtain funding necessary to provide Sunday bus service.



- Additional bicycle carrying capacity and bicycle amenities – adding bicycle capacity would help increase ridership. Island transit should increase bicycle carrying capacity for service on Whidbey Island.
- Park-and-ride improvements – it has been stated that these areas along the byway should be expanded as required and become “park and ride parks” with more emphasis on landscaping, greens, public art, amenities for transit riders, and community gathering and waiting spaces. These types of enhancements would also elevate the overall scenic character of the byway.
- Special tours and programs - The byway committee and local chambers and tourism organizations should coordinate special tour routes for island visitors with private bus companies. Island Transit should assist in promoting and coordinating connections with the private tour-bus route activities. (Envision the “parks” tour bus, the “historic sites” tour bus, the “beaches” bus, the biking/hiking bus, etc.).

5. Transportation System Analysis and Recommendations

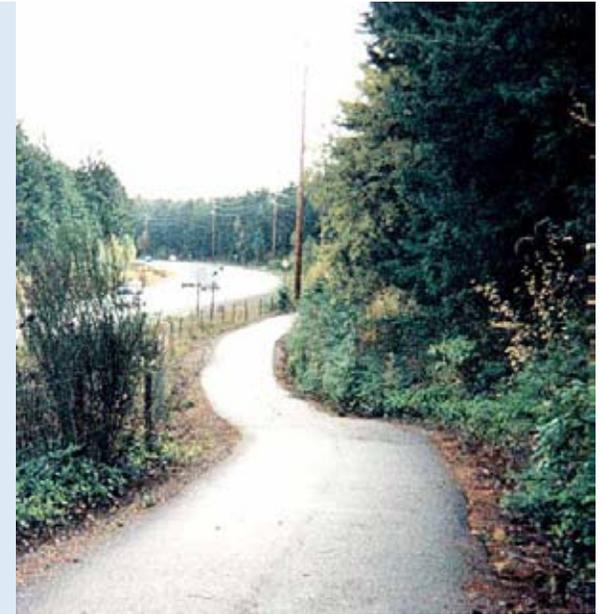
Bicycle Facilities Improvement Recommendations

Bicycle improvement recommendations to enhance byway travelers' experiences include:

- Promoting tour routes – Island County and local jurisdictions should consider promoting local tour routes off the main byway corridor – see Figure 5.1 for touring opportunities. These tour routes could be promoted through maps distributed on the ferries, website information, tourism guides, and other means. Further coordination and communication with local community residents and representatives will be important before proceeding with this recommendation.
- Multiuse trail system expansion – provide additional trails and paths for exclusive use by bicyclists and pedestrians. Studies indicate that recreational bicyclists (such as families and people enjoying the scenery) prefer off-road trails compared to roadway shoulders.

Pedestrian Facilities Improvement Recommendations

- Provide safe and convenient crossing opportunities for pedestrians on State Route 20 and State Route 525 near transit stops, activity centers, and in the gateway communities
- Provide traffic calming to enhance safety for byway travelers and pedestrians.
- Investigate the need for and identify new trailhead opportunities and needed improvements in those locations.
- Multiuse trail system expansion – provide additional trails, like the Kettles Trail, along the byway. Provide opportunities for beach walks and hikes, along with beach walking stewardship and education.
- Map – provide a map/guide/brochure depicting the “top 20 recommended walks on Whidbey” that are available at state parks, local libraries, schools, and recreational centers, and visitor centers.



Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Plan



Introduction

Unique qualities and significant resources surround the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way. This interpretive master plan provides ideas for communicating these qualities to residents and visitors of the corridor.

The most significant stories related to the six intrinsic qualities (natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archeological, and recreational) can be tied together with interpretive themes and presented through a variety of media. These

themes and the relevant stories are the heart of an interpretive program. The interpretive program educates, entertains, and elevates the experience for people of all ages. From the existing conditions analysis and intrinsic quality research, several reoccurring themes emerged that give the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way its unique character. The potential stories related to the special places on Whidbey Island are summarized in this section of the Corridor Management Plan.

Several agencies on Whidbey Island have already created their own interpretive plans/programs. Many of the state parks, including Deception Pass, Fort Ebey, Fort Casey, and South Whidbey, have their own interpretive plans. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, managed by the National Park Service, also has an interpretive plan. Interpreting the resources and historical stories of Whidbey Island helps both the visitor and residents understand the importance of preserving the area for present and future generations.



Purpose of Interpretation

The purpose of interpretation is to broaden visitors' and residents' awareness of the byway story. Interpretation is the specific communication strategy that is used to translate information from the technical language of an expert to the everyday language of all age groups, and, with that goal in mind, it should be creative and enjoyable.

Francis Tilden, a renowned expert on interpretation provided this definition of the subject: *An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.*

Interpretation can be accomplished through a variety of media including signs, exhibits, visitor centers, audio/visual productions, publications, and special programs such as guided hikes and tours, living history reenactments, lectures, and other special events. Interpretation of the byway's treasures will foster an appreciation of the area by educating people about the significance of the island's important resources. Stewardship messages to "tread lightly" on the natural environment should be

interwoven into the interpretive program.

Central Interpretive Themes

Some overall interpretive themes, central to telling the story of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way, have been developed as part of this Corridor Management Plan. These themes consist of elements that highlight the rich natural and historical aspects of - "island life," - past, present, and, the future we see for the byway.

Strategic Geography

Throughout prehistory, history, and present times, Whidbey Island has played a seminal strategic role due to its location. Whether as a natural environment supportive of a wide range of flora and fauna, as a gathering and sometimes contested, place for indigenous peoples, as an embarkation point for Puget Sound, as a national defense stalwart armed during the Spanish American War and World War II, or as a "do nothing here" respite from the rigors of urban life, the island story must include a nod to this remarkable legacy stemming from its geography.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan

People and Conflict

The advance of human occupation on Whidbey Island contributes a compelling chapter to the byway story, a chapter not without some conflict. Concentrations of people linked by a common national origin (as the Dutch in Oak Harbor), a common understanding of social utopia (as in Freeland), or a common desire for free land to farm (as the donation land claimants in central Whidbey) are examples of groups that give special character to local places. Likewise, tensions traceable to competing tribal interests, racial intolerance toward Chinese settlers, and entrepreneurs seeking profit from land speculation, among others, are all well-documented and must be part of the story.

Water First, Then Roads

An integrated road network was a relatively late arrival that was grafted onto a geography established and nurtured by water connections to points off the island. The byway corridor has shifted over the past hundred years from offshore to onshore, and most people are able to experience the island in a way that would have been impossible until quite recently.

Let's Go To Whidbey

People have always been attracted to Whidbey Island. For thousands of years people have visited the island and made this special place their home. Through changing times and tastes, Whidbey Island has been able to offer succeeding generations the ability to provide for their own needs through its natural resources. The island has always been a destination, whether for a day visit to a festival, or for a lifetime for those who get hooked on life on the rock. Visitors and residents are struck by the variety of attractions available within a very discrete area, and it is perhaps this concentration that has contributed to the enduring ability of Whidbey to lure people to its shores and uplands. The scenic byway offers indisputable evidence of this vast array.

A Place for All Time - The Preservation of Whidbey

Residents of Whidbey Island know how lucky they are to live on Whidbey Island. They cherish, respect, and take pride in the beautiful, natural environment that surrounds them from all sides: water, prairies, working farms, flora, fauna, 100-year old homesteads, and numerous historic buildings and monuments. The byway is an individual one because these



Island County Historical Society Museum
2004 Calendar—Native American Heritage:
Tribal Influences and History in Island
County, Ernest Hancock, year unknown

“People have lived in Island County for millennia; their history there has been inextricably tied with the islands and the waters that surround them.”

White, Richard. Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980. 5.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan



traits exist. The partnership between the communities and local, state, and national agencies will ensure that Whidbey Island residents and visitors have opportunities to enjoy the “island experience” and all the particular attributes for years to come. What will most of Whidbey Island be like 100 years from now? Hopefully, very similar to how it is now.

Other sub-themes and important messages that should be interpreted along the byway include:

- “Slow down, relax, you’re on island time.”
- A visit to Whidbey is a step back in time; please respect the island’s unique heritage and sensitive ecosystems so this experience can be preserved for others.
- What makes islands unique? Why is Whidbey Island one of the most unique islands in the world?
- Whidbey is a place for all seasons - watch the changes throughout the year when you visit your favorite places on the island.
- No other scenic byway is on an island.

Recommendations for Interpreting the Byway Story

This section outlines recommended themes and interpretation opportunities for many of the places along the byway that travelers visit and enjoy. The ideas listed below can be conveyed at these sites through a variety of media, including signs, wayside exhibits, brochures, kiosks, maps, special programs, audio/visual media, and other means (living history demonstrations for example). The collective stories of these places come together to represent the overall tale of the byway. As such, interpretation related to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way should be organized around the central themes previously presented to the greatest possible extent. See Figure 6.1 for interpretive themes and locations.

Deception Pass State Park

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Deception Pass State Park has a rich human history, dating back thousands of years.
- Deception Pass State Park is home to many diverse and fragile ecosystems.
- Many people travel to Deception Pass each year to partake in the numerous

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan

recreational opportunities the park has to offer.

- The story of Deception Pass is one of humans and the way they interact with their surrounding environment.
- The resources of Deception Pass can only be preserved through the help of all park visitors.
- The park's handsome landscape was shaped by the Civilian Conservation Corps, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Era workforce.
- History of the Native American peoples – the story of the Salish - is interwoven with the lands and waters of this area.
- The Deception Pass Bridge provides a dramatic gateway to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way.
- There are opportunities to provide enhanced interpretation throughout the park.

Dugualla Bay

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Dugualla Bay provides critical habitat to a diversity of wildlife species.
- A viewing platform with spotting scopes and interpretation about the role of the wildlife habitat of this area and the diversity of species it supports and supporting facilities, such as parking, could be provided in this area.

Hastie Lake

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- A viewing platform with telescopes and interpretation about the importance of the wildlife habitat of this area and the diversity of species it supports and supporting facilities, such as parking, could be provided in this area.

Downtown Oak Harbor (Marina and City Park)

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Oak Harbor is an important center for commerce on Whidbey Island, and a gateway community to the byway offering an assortment of facilities and services to travelers.
- Navy history and military influences could be interpreted.
- Oak Harbor past and present pier activities – fishing, water taxi fleet, tours, etc. could be interpreted.
- Early twentieth century development shaped the city's character and evidence of much of this era is still visible today.
- Trails map, water activities guide and other information could be provided to visitors.



Photo by Helen Chatfield-Weeks

The uniquely designed, historic 1910 Neil Tower fell into disrepair but was re-constructed in 1989 by volunteers. It resembles a Dutch windmill without arms. A small museum is located at the base, named after the major donors of the reconstruction effort, Orren and Ruth Ward.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan



Blue Fox Drive-In

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- The Blue Fox Drive-In is one of the few remaining outdoor movie theaters in the country.
- The history of drive-in movie theaters as cultural experiences (old photos, movies, etc.) could be interpreted.

San De Fuca

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Historic setting/importance of historic preservation could be interpreted here.
- The schoolhouse is an important historical icon.

Penn Cove

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Mussel farming still plays an important role in Penn Cove.
- Story of the Salish villages/tribal uses of the area could be interpreted here.
- Reasons early settlers established in Penn Cove
- George Vancouver and Joseph Whidbey Expedition

Grasser's Hill/ Kennedy Lagoon

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Early use of the area by native peoples could be interpreted here.
- Identification of aquatic life of the intertidal zone and importance of proper beach use for protection of resources could be interpreted.
- Historic settlement and early government of this area - what remnants of that era still exist and can be interpreted?

Fort Ebey State Park

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Glacial kettles can still be seen in this area today.
- Respect the park's natural features – stay on trails, keep dogs on leashes, etc.

Town of Coupeville

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- The rich history of the town and its settlement is reflected in its unique character.
- Why does the town look so similar to how it looked 100 years ago? The town

is a living example of the importance of historic preservation and how it has enhanced community pride.

- Coupeville should be experienced on foot - opportunity to provide a walking tour map.
- Coupeville is an important byway community - a place where travelers can go for facilities and services.

Kettles Trail

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Map of trail/ interpretive waysides along the route could be provided.
- Why walking matters – health and environmental benefits of walking could be interpreted at the trailhead.
- Where are the other trail opportunities on Whidbey? List /map of sites

Smith Prairie

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Introduction to a native prairie environment - plant species and importance of preservation (one of the few remaining habitats of this type in the region);
- History of prairie land ownership and preservation measures underway could be interpreted here.

Fort Casey State Park

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Fort Casey was a part of the U.S. Army Coast Artillery defense system.
- Admiralty Head Lighthouse was an important navigational aide to the tall sailing ships.

Ebey's Prairie

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Partnerships – How the reserve achieves success by working with surrounding land owners to preserve the prairie and the agricultural uses of the land.
- Recreational opportunities – trails map: step out into the landscape and experience the reserve on foot.
- Protect the natural resources – there is a diversity of habitats here for plants and wildlife.
- Unique character: a visit to the reserve is like “stepping back in time” – prairies and farms, historic barns and houses, lakes and ponds, beaches and bluffs, woodlands and wetlands – experience the range of this setting.

“It was fully intended, back in the 1970s, that Ebey’s Prairie and adjoining farmland — nearly half of Whidbey’s total — would be turned into three subdivisions, the windows of each new house jostling for a scrap of scenery that would then be covered by another house. In other words, the American Way.”

Bill Dietrich. *Whidbey’s Secret*.
Seattle Times. June 2004

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan



Crockett Lake

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- The lake is home to many rare and endangered species such as river otters, bald eagles, northern harrier, whistling swans, snowy owls, great blue herons, and shovellers.
- Identified as one of the most important bird areas in Washington – what can you see? Identify bird species
- Important rest stop and wintering area for shorebirds. These, and other birds, connect the island to Arctic tundra, Cascade Mountain slopes, and the tropics of Central and South America. “The Isle Way as a Flyway.”

Keystone Spit & Ferry Crossing/Terminal

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Keystone Spit is a unique land form that has served many purposes.
- The spit provides habitat for an abundance of bird species.
- The ferry crossing is an incredibly scenic journey and an important gateway experience for the Whidbey Island Scenic Byway.
- Stewardship messages, respect for the island’s resources, should start during the ferry crossing.

Lake Hancock

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Emergence of a wetland - the delicate and diverse ecosystems of the island could be interpreted here.
- What can you see from here?
- Sharing the land - identify the wildlife habitat prevalent in this area.

Greenbank Farm

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Who has owned and operated the farm over time – unique land ownership changes since the beginning
- Cooperation – the farm is operated through cooperative efforts and is a living, working example of the importance of agricultural-based lifestyles on the island.
- Trail map – experience the farm on foot - additional interpretive exhibits could be provided throughout the farm and along the trail system.
- The farm is an important traveler hub along the byway - centrally located on the island.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan

Bayview Corner

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Cultural history of Bayview – story of preserving what is left and building community pride.
- Organic farming – importance of farming community and why organic matters
- Artists and craftspeople of this area could be highlighted.
- Native plant species of Whidbey Island could be identified and interpreted here.
- Why native matters- the benefit of preserving and using native plants in the landscape.

South Whidbey State Park

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- What is an old growth forest? Why is it important? This is home to one of the last old growth forest on Whidbey (and in Washington)!
- Beach education – “respect your beaches,” messages of beach etiquette could be interpreted here.

Freeland

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Experience Freeland on foot – wetland, trails, etc.
- Freeland beginnings – socialism on Whidbey, history of the town’s name, etc.
- Value of retaining native vegetation in an urban setting could be interpreted here.

Useless Bay

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- The story of the Maxwellton watershed – its significance to Whidbey
- Salmon – why upstream matters could be interpreted here.
- Historical/cultural background – the story of the Chautauqua community could be interpreted here.



Double Bluff

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Importance of beach restoration and protection could be interpreted here.
- Visitor facilities, parking, pull-out, etc could be enhanced here.

City of Langley

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Local driving loop off the byway should be promoted here.
- Historic town: picturesque setting & scenic views – an overlook could be provided here.
- Tourism experience - an important place for traveler access to facilities and services.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan



Clinton Port Facilities and Ferry Terminal

Interpretive Messages, Themes, and Ideas:

- Why islands are unique places – geologic features, people that live here, sense of isolation could be interpreted here.
- Community of Clinton – identity could be interpreted here.
- Clinton is an important center for commerce on Whidbey Island, and a gateway community to the byway offering a host of facilities and services to travelers.
- Ferry crossing is a dramatic gateway to the byway - an exceptionally scenic experience.
- Stewardship messages should begin during the ferry crossing.

Interpretive Media

Below are descriptions of general interpretive media that could be developed at the places described above.

Maps

Maps of the entire byway can be provided at the gateway locations: Deception's Pass, Clinton, and Keystone Ferry. These maps would highlight the byway, intrinsic qualities, and interpretive opportunities.

Maps highlighting recreational opportunities could be provided at some key locations such as Greenbank Farm, Kettles Trail, Ebey's Landing, Oak Harbor, etc.

Brochures

Various brochures could be designed and published with the byway logo and themes. One could highlight "touring routes, while another could identify all the native plant and animal species prevalent on Whidbey Island and where they can be viewed. Brochures should also contain stewardship messages and preservation opportunities open to the public (volunteering, donating to organizations, etc.).

Interpretive Panels

Thematically designed interpretive panels could identify, describe, and illustrate a variety of messages to be communicated at any of the above sites.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan

Live Interpretive Programs and Other Creative Events

Some themes could be interpreted through living history programs, reenactments, or other special events. These activities can be conducted in cooperation with special groups and organizations (local historical societies, etc.). An important phase of these types of interpretive programs is the training of participants. Also, these types of programs provide opportunities to coordinate with local schools, teachers, and students, who can play meaningful roles in the events. Local residents could participate in live interpretive programs at various sites, including a historical tour of Coupeville or Langley, or a wetland tour. The variety of special activities that can help interpret the byway's story is as broad as the imaginations of those developing and conducting these programs.

Audio Media

Audio CDs or tapes could be produced for the entire byway length. Audio media should be centered around a theme. For example, one audio media could focus on the natural environment, one could focus on historical stories and structure still present, and another could focus on "Whidbey today" and the cultural landscape.

Self-Guided Tours and Interpretive Trails

Self-guided tours provide another opportunity to interpret the byway. Visitors and residents can take self-guided tour using Island Transit, which would stop at various trailheads or the communities along the byway. Self-guided trails in certain areas accompanied by a brochure, such as wetlands or prairies, could provide an opportunity to educate people on the merit of these areas.

Multilingual Information

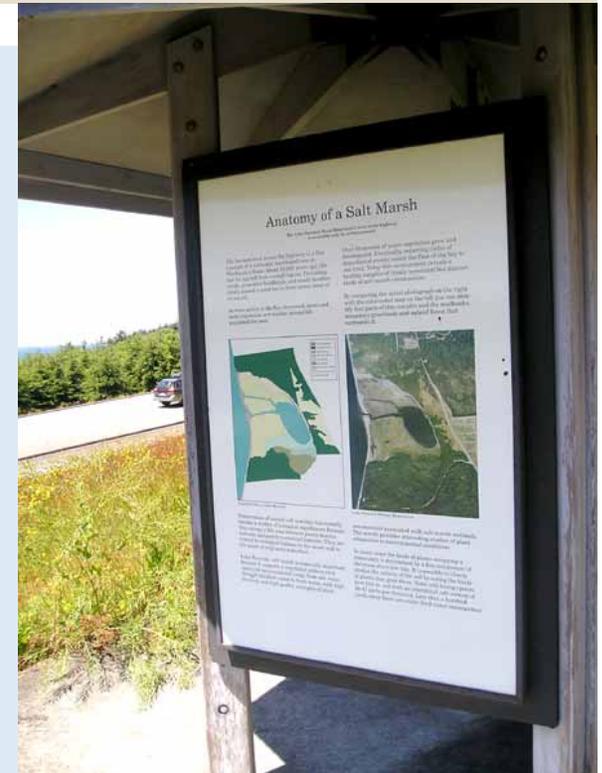
Information and interpretive media for non-English speaking visitors should be provided as practicable. For example, audio media could be translated into multiple languages.

Commemorative Markers and Signs

Less interpretive media and more monumentation of historic activities, commemorative markers provide some opportunity to educate visitors about the past through simple statements of historic events that occurred at specific sites and buildings.

Experiences for Everyone

It is important that interpretive programs and experiences be as universally accessible as possible to



6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan



people of all ages and physical abilities. Providing tactile experiences (learning through touch), audio media, and graphics designed to display simple messages can ensure that the exhibits appeal to the broadest audience possible. Firm, stable ground surfaces around outdoor exhibits and the provision of a route of access that does not exceed typical maximum gradient standards for people in wheelchairs is also an important consideration.

Other Interpretive Recommendations

- The people who live and work on Whidbey Island should be the storytellers.
- Direct the highest concentrations/volumes of travelers to the places that have capacity to handle their needs - the towns and villages on the island; all other places (especially sensitive historic and ecological environments) should be designed to handle lower concentrations/volumes of visitors.
- Encourage experiencing Whidbey Island by foot, bicycle, bus or by water. Encourage and direct visitors to leave their cars off the island or in communities such as Clinton and Oak Harbor (fits well with previous point.)
- Stewardship and environmental education themes should be woven throughout all interpretation and

visitor information displays and media (including beach etiquette).

Historic Site Commemorative Project

An important project is underway on Whidbey Island. This project will commemorate several historical sites and buildings across the island with historical markers. The local committee involved in the project is currently coordinating with Island County and WSDOT on the placement of directional signing to help visitors find the locations. A brochure/map is also being created, and it is recommended that this information also be provided on tourism websites. The following sites have been identified for commemoration through this project.

Current Sites in Process:

- Greenbank Farm
- Deer Lagoon Grange #846 - 5142 Bayview Rd. Langley, Wa. 98260
- Langley — So. Whidbey Historical Museum
- Dog House - 230 1st St. Langley
- Freeland Hall
- Freeland (the story of Freeland, an early Socialist development)
- Historic Coupeville
- Neil Barn and Water Tower - 98 N.E.

6. Telling the Byway Story: An Interpretive Master Plan

Barron Drive - Oak Harbor

- St. Peter's Lutheran Church - 6309 S. Wilson Pl. - Clinton

Future Possibilities:

- Admiralty Head Lighthouse
- Ebey's Landing view site end of Sherman Rd. Coupeville
- San De Fuca Schoolhouse
- Alexander
- Bayview School
- Bayview Hall
- Crockett Blockhouse
- Glendale Store
- Old Powder Plant - Glenndale
- Old Indian and White graveyard <name corner of Spyglass Dr and Bush Pt. Rd
- Big Rock - Coupeville
- Glendale Railroad





Visitor Experience and Services Program



Introduction

Creating additional opportunities to promote, educate, and direct visitors to the unique qualities along the byway is an important aspect of this plan. Each year over a million people visit Whidbey Island to enjoy the numerous activities offered along the byway and throughout the island, such as sightseeing, hiking, camping, bicycling, fishing, kayaking, shopping, and attending cultural events.

The visitor experience related to the Whidbey Island byway should be memorable, educational, safe, and enjoyable. Visitors should be provided with a variety of opportunities to relish the beauty of the island and to learn about the rich history and culture of the people who have lived there throughout the ages. Island businesses should accommodate visitor needs through friendly, hospitality-driven service.

This section of the corridor management plan assesses existing visitor facilities, as well as websites and information that serves the needs of visitors. This section also provides recommendations for improving these services for both residents and visitors.

7. Visitor Experience and Services Program



“Doing nothing here takes several deceptively active forms. The difference is in enjoying these things in an environment that demands absolutely nothing of you.”

www.donothinghere.com

A Review of Existing Visitor Services and Facilities

The Whidbey Island Byway currently offers several visitor services, such as chamber of commerce facilities, facilities at existing parks, and private businesses throughout the island. However, there are no public comfort station or rest area facilities along the byway. Below is a list of existing visitor services located along the byway:

- Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce/ Visitor Information Center
- Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce in Coupeville
- Freeland Chamber of Commerce
- Langley South Whidbey Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Casey Interpretive Center – Admiral Lighthouse (part-time)
- Washington State Ferries
- Deception Pass Bridge

These existing facilities provide visitors with information on entertainment, accommodations, eateries, and shopping published in brochures. There are several tourist publications printed each season on Whidbey Island including the MacGregor “Newcomer and Visitors Guide” and the Whidbey News-Times “Islander,” and Marketplace. Each

publication includes interesting facts and information about various places on Whidbey Island. Because the Whidbey Island Byway is a part of the Cascade Loop, the Cascade Loop Association includes information about activities, accommodations, events, and maps for Whidbey Island in the brochure it publishes annually.

The World Wide Web is increasingly becoming a research tool for visitors from all over the world. Millions of people use the web to gather information about vacation destinations, including Whidbey Island. There are several websites that promote Whidbey Island. These include:

- <http://www.donothinghere.com> – Island County Tourism
- <http://www.islandweb.org/> - Island County Tourism
- <http://www.oakharborchamber.org/> - Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce
- <http://www.whidbey.net/> - provides links to various Whidbey communities, organizations, and services

All of the state parks and Ebey’s Landing maintain websites, and many of the businesses, including bed & breakfasts, hotels, motels, galleries, cafes, and restaurants have websites. Information

about transportation options is also on the web, including Island Transit and the Washington State Ferry System website. Before a visitor arrives to Whidbey Island, he/she can access much of the information needed for a visit.

Visitor Statistics

The majority of visitors coming to Whidbey Island for a day trip or overnight stay are from the greater Puget Sound region. A survey conducted by Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve in 1995 showed that 59% of visitors were from Washington, 29% were from other parts of the US, and 10% were from Canada. Of the 59% from Washington, 37% were from King County.

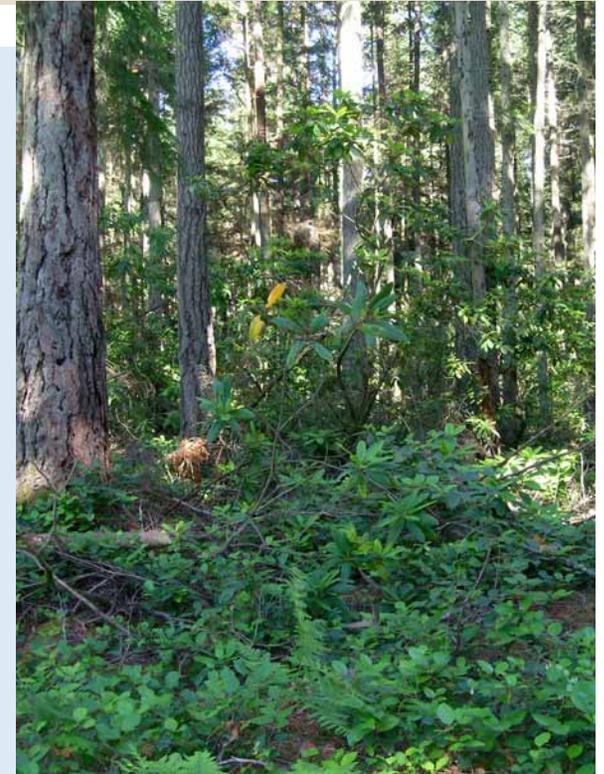
According to the Washington State Parks Commission 2,725,211 people visited Deception Pass State Park in 2002, making it the most visited state park in Washington. In that same year 89,659 people visited South Whidbey State Park, 741,519 visited Fort Casey State Park, and 305,734 visited Fort Ebey State Park.

Preserving and Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Visitors are drawn to Whidbey Island to experience the majestic and beautiful scenery, history and culture, abundant natural resources (such as the natural forests, prairie landscapes, and beaches), extensive recreation opportunities, and the distinctive rural character of the island defined by the lifestyles of the people who live there. There would be no tourist flow without the preservation of these qualities. Many of these intrinsic qualities are already maintained and preserved through land management and land use plans; however, some of these qualities are at risk. It is imperative that the preservation of these characteristics continues to be a priority for the county, state, and federal governments, as well as the citizens of Whidbey Island. More information on specific guidelines for preserving and enhancing the byway's character are discussed in Section 8 – Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character.

Emphasis on Stewardship and Education

It is necessary for visitors to understand what makes Whidbey Island special, thus part of the visitor experience should



7. Visitor Experience and Services Program



“Island County became known as a place of old settlers and longtime residents.”

White, Richard. Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980. 55.

include stewardship and educational messages that help visitors appreciate the exceptional beauty of the ecology and geology, historic buildings and landscapes, and natural resources of Whidbey Island. Below is a list of such messages that should be conveyed:

- A visit to Whidbey is a step back in time; please respect the island’s unique heritage and sensitive ecosystems so this experience can be preserved for all time.
- Beach habitat is fragile; please respect our beaches by picking up after yourself and your pet.
- Island habitats, including prairies, lakes, forests, beaches, and wetlands, support an abundance of wildlife. Please respect the land and wildlife habitats.
- Whidbey Island is home to a large variety of wild animals and birds; please allow them to flourish.
- You are traveling a very special, unique island byway; let’s keep it beautiful and litter-free.
- Environmental and safety education programs – “Ride Transit” and “Share the Road with Bikes.”
- Make it your goal to leave no trace of your visit.

Whidbey Island Residents are Byway Visitors Too!

Whidbey Island residents travel the byway more than visitors do. The byway functions as the central transportation corridor on the island, linking all the communities and important destinations and origins. For this reason it is important that island residents also are encouraged to become stewards of the byway. Ongoing byway programs and projects should encourage residents to preserve and enhance the island not only for visitors, but for themselves as well.

Another important aspect of byway planning is making sure that as experiences for visitors are expanded and enhanced, the rural lifestyles and community settings also are maintained and preserved, and impacts related to increased tourism are minimized. This can be accomplished by directing visitors to the areas of the island designed to accommodate their needs - the towns, communities, and visitor information centers. Visitors should be encouraged to leave their cars behind or to park and ride Island Transit to minimize traffic impacts. Residents should be made aware of the abundant of walking trails available on the island. As mentioned previously, the importance of educating visitors about environmental

stewardship, beach use etiquette, respecting private property rights, and other messages is critical to the success of this byway plan.

Balancing the Needs of Byway Users

State Route 20 and State Route 525 are the main thoroughfares for all traffic on Whidbey Island, including freight, residents, and travelers. For this reason, it is important to look at the needs of all byway travelers. Both residents and visitors should be encouraged to use transit, carpool, or vanpool along the byway. Bicycle riders and pedestrians are also byway users. Wider shoulders and a “share the road” campaign could help bicyclists feel safer sharing the road with freight trucks, recreational vehicles, and cars. Recreational pull-off areas, passing lanes, turn lanes, and other features, discussed in this section and in the transportation section, will also help alleviate some of the congestion along the byway. Visitors will be encouraged to use the recreational pull-off areas to enjoy the scenic vistas and natural beauty of Whidbey Island. Touring Routes, as discussed in Section 5 – Transportation, will also disperse visitors and bicyclists. These routes will

provide travel opportunities off the main byway.

It may be desirable to consider additional facilities and improvements that will help balance the uses of the roadway. Recommended strategies for accommodating all users include:

- Promote multi-modal transportation (discussed throughout this plan).
- Educate byway travelers, including residents, visitors, bus drivers, and truck drivers, about bicyclists; Bicyclists are allowed on the roadway and they deserve the respect of other byway travelers.
- Create recreational pull-off areas to disperse visitors and provide resting opportunities for byway travelers.
- Promote touring routes to create more opportunities for visitors and disperse byway travelers. The promotion of these routes needs to be closely coordinated with island residents and communities to ensure that impacts to lifestyles and local access and mobility are minimized.
- Encourage communities to design highway treatments and traffic calming techniques, including medians, street trees, crosswalks, etc. to enhance the safety of pedestrian travel and when crossing of the highway.



7. Visitor Experience and Services Program



- Create and maximize the visitors' use of motorist services and businesses on the byway.

The Important Role of Multi-Modal Transportation

The Whidbey Island Scenic Byway very well may be the only byway in the country that can be accessed entirely by modes other than an automobile, including the ferry, public transit, bicycles, kayaks, and other watercraft.

In 2008, construction is scheduled to begin on a multi-modal transportation facility in Mukilteo. This facility will include the ferry terminal, Sound Transit commuter train station, bus center, and a passenger pick-up/off-load area. The completion of the facility, in 2010, will offer new possibilities for multi-modal byway travelers. City dwellers will be able to hop on the train in Seattle, connect to the ferry, and travel the byway using transit or bikes. The multi-modal facility offers an opportunity for businesses to provide shuttles to and from their places. For instance, B&B's could co-operate a shuttle to transport guests to and from the ferry terminal. Once in town, visitors could use transit options to travel to various destinations along the byway.

Another opportunity would be a water taxi to and from the communities along the byway. Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and Langley all have port facilities and marinas that could accommodate a small water taxi fleet. The water taxi could be both a tour opportunity and transportation option.

In order to attract non-motorized travelers, pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be a priority. For example, Deception Pass is the only state park with bike racks. All the parks should have bike racks to encourage bicycling to and from the parks and pedestrian travel should also be encouraged. Pedestrians should feel safe crossing the byway to access transit, otherwise they may be discouraged to use it. Safe and convenient access to transit will encourage use. An assessment of crossings near bus stops should be completed, and crossings should be improved where possible.

A list of other recommended transportation improvements is included in Section 5 – Transportation Analysis and Recommendations.

Recommended Improvements and Enhancements

While there are several existing visitor service centers located at the chamber of commerce offices on Whidbey Island, there are several potential areas of need where improvements and facilities could enhance the visitor experience.

Gateways

Visitor information and education centers should be located in Whidbey's gateways including Clinton, Deception Pass, and Keystone. These visitor centers could be self-guided and self-sufficient and provide visitors with education, interpretation, information about lodging, recreational opportunities, historic sites, and other items of interest for visitors. These centers should also provide information about transportation options, such as Island Transit routes, bike maps, and pedestrian facilities. Visitor kiosks also should be located in Mukilteo and Port Townsend since these communities likewise "gateways" to the byway.

Comfort Station/Rest Area

A comfort station/rest area should be located at a central point on the byway. Assessing the feasibility of developing a

restroom and additional visitor accommodations such as picnic facilities at the Lake Hancock Overlook is recommended. This facility could also include interpretation about Lake Hancock, see Section 6 for interpretive themes for Lake Hancock.

Interpretive Facilities

Interpretation was discussed in Section 6 – Telling the Byway's Story. This section included recommended interpretation throughout the byway. The themes of the byway should be clear in site-specific interpretation which details the history, culture, and natural aspects of the location. Similarly, sensitive areas should include environmental and stewardship messages.

Wildlife Viewing Platforms

Thousands of people visit Whidbey Island to encounter wildlife and the diverse wildlife habitats of the area. Viewing opportunities

should be increased to improve visitors' wildlife viewing experiences. Below is a list of sites for recommended viewing platforms:

- **Crockett Lake** is visited by multitudes of birders each year. Platforms would enhance birding opportunities for visitors and residents alike. Partnering with Washington State Parks and Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve is needed for this effort.
- **Hastie Lake** – A viewing platform would attract more nature enthusiasts. The design must discourage people from creating "social trails" to the lake itself.
- **Dugualla Bay Lake** – A viewing platform would be an asset.



7. Visitor Experience and Services Program



- **Greenbank Farm** – A viewing platform with a spotting telescope to watch whales would provide additional opportunities at the Farm.

Recreational Pull-off Areas

Creating recreational pull-off areas or waysides along the byway will allow visitors the opportunity to leave the highway and enjoy the beauty of Whidbey Island. Formalized pull-off areas create space for a small number of cars or a bus. Bus stops should be added to the pull-off areas. These areas will also create opportunities to disperse visitation throughout the island. Pull-offs should have interpretive signage and small signs on the byway directing people to them. Below is a list of potential pull-off sites:

- **Hastie Lake** – Create a pull-off area to accommodate five or six cars (or a small bus.)
- **Grasser's Lagoon** – Improve the existing pull-off area. This is a popular fishing and birding site for visitors and residents. A strong partnership with

Ebey's Landing should be encouraged.

- **Smith Prairie** – A pull-off with parking spaces is needed in this area. Each spring, people come out to view and enjoy the native wildflowers in bloom. A visitor kiosk could tell the story of the prairie. A partnership with the Au Sable Institute is recommended.
- **Double Bluff** – create a pull-off with parking for a few cars. Also, create bicycle parking to encourage use.
- **Possession Point** – create a pull-off with parking for a few cars. This area is used often by kayakers.
- **Penn Cove** – create a pull-off/viewing area for mussel harvesting activities.
- **Clinton** – create a pull-off/viewing platform near Clinton Beach project currently underdevelopment by the Port of South Whidbey.

Brochures

There are several existing brochures for Whidbey Island. Most provide advertising for businesses along the byway. Educational and informational brochures could be made available for byway travelers to learn about the many unique aspects of Whidbey Island, including history, geology, vegetation, wildlife, and cultural events. These brochures could be available at the



gateway kiosks and visitor centers as well as local libraries and cafes for locals. Brochure information should be designed to be easily posted on web sites. Potential brochure topics are described below. In addition to, or in lieu, of a multitude of brochures information related to these topics could be made available in displays, posters, and other types of media.

History of Whidbey Island

The history of Whidbey Island is rich, beginning with the early native peoples who inhabited and visited the island. A brochure with a chronological history of Whidbey could be available for visitors. This brochure could also be available to school groups visiting the state parks or Ebey's Landing.

Historical Structures

The South Whidbey Historical Society is currently working on a brochure to highlight significant historical structures on Whidbey Island. This brochure will be produced and made available to visitors and residents so that they may appreciate the preservation and restoration of structures and their associated stories.

Geology

The formation of Whidbey Island is unique. A brochure explaining the glacial periods that caused this would be educational for visitors and school groups.

Marine Life

An island is surrounded by marine life. It is a part of the everyday culture of Whidbey Island and a brochure could explain the importance of marine life to the island, provide a description of these creations, and places to see them. Emphasis on the proper use of the beach should be addressed, together with information on how to get involved in protection efforts (Beachwatchers, Maxwellton, etc).

Vegetation

The vegetation and landscapes change from north to south due to differing amounts of precipitation on the island. A brochure could include line drawings and descriptions of the flora and fauna that make up the various vegetation communities and landscapes on the island.



7. Visitor Experience and Services Program



Cultural Events

One brochure should continue to include all the cultural events that take place on the island, including festivals in Oak Harbor, parades in Coupeville, celebrations at Greenbank, blooming rhododendrons at Meerkerk, art shows in Langley, etc. This brochure would need to be updated annually to include

the dates of each event. All cultural events are distinct and are linked to the history and natural environment of Whidbey Island.

Multi-Lingual Provisions

Multi-lingual information and interpretation should be provided for byway travelers where feasible. Byway information should be designed to be easily understood by a broad audience. Graphics, maps features, symbols, and universally recognized words can help to better guide travelers.

Visitor Surveys

Knowing the visitors will aid in planning for the types of facilities needed and the information visitors are interested in obtaining. It is useful to know why visitors are traveling the byway and what activities they are interested in. An annual or bi-annual survey would assist the committee in planning for increased visitor service. The survey should be conducted at the state parks, Ebey's Landing, Oak Harbor, Langley, Greenbank, etc. to capture the opinions of a wide variety of byway users.

Touring Routes

The visitor experience should also promote touring routes (See Section 5 –

Transportation for touring routes.) These routes will not only disperse visitor traffic but also provide additional opportunities to experience Whidbey “off the beaten path.” Destinations such as Langley, Double Bluff County Park, and several state parks are accessed using alternative routes.

Local Resident Involvement

Local residents are very knowledgeable about the cultural and historical stories of Whidbey Island. Involve the local community in the visitor experience. For instance, a local resident could provide historical tours of Langley and/or Coupeville showing visitors treasured structures while educating them on the importance of preservation. Residents could also give tours of beaches or nature hikes containing elements of the principles of protection of valuable resources. Residents are the “stewards” of the byway and should pass along important messages about preservation and protection of natural resources to visitors.

Existing Services

Encourage travelers to use existing services including visitor centers, chamber offices, etc. for information.

Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character



Introduction

The Whidbey Island Scenic Byway has been recognized for its exceptional scenic, historical, cultural, natural, and recreational qualities. These special qualities should be preserved and, in some instances, enhanced to retain the byway as a unique, attractive place.

Because the byway encompasses a diversity of landscapes, one set of design guidelines or development blueprints cannot be created for the entire byway.

Architectural styles differ as one travels through the byway. For example, many buildings in Oak Harbor are representative of the 1950s, post-WW II, while the vernacular architecture of Coupeville dates back to the late 1800s to early 1900s farmhouses, cottages, and bungalows.

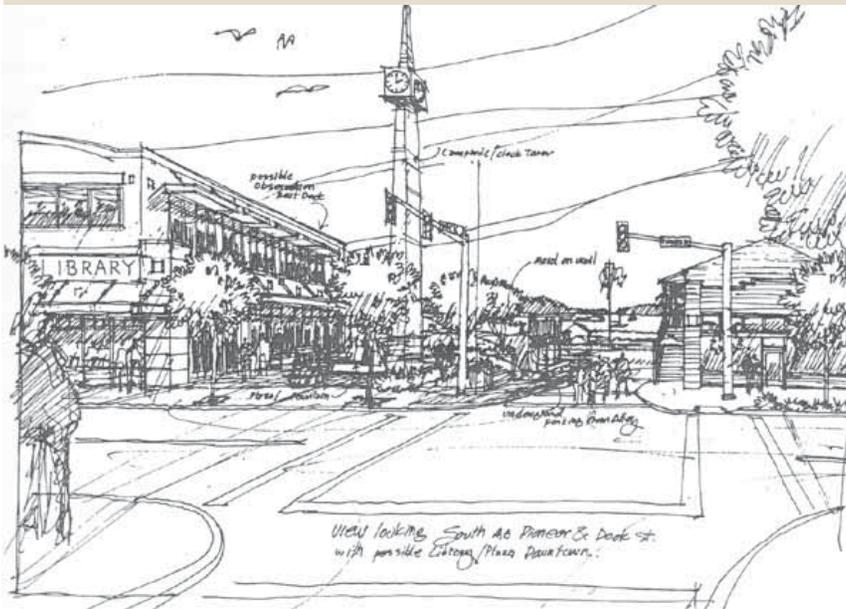
This section of the plan provides a summary of the existing design and development guidelines in place along the byway as well as suggestions and

recommendations for additional development and design guidelines. It is important to note that this section is included solely for the purpose of providing a set of guidelines to retain the byway's character and is not intended to be regulatory.

Summary of Existing Design and Development Guidelines

There are several existing documents that have been created to help guide the

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character



Design Assistance Team Sketch,
Oak Harbor Pride, 2000

design and development of buildings, structures, and landscape along the corridor. Below is a brief summary of those documents.

North Whidbey

Deception Pass State Park has its own character in a forested landscape is retained and managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Buildings, roadside railings, signs, and other elements have been designed in accordance with the “rustic Cascadian” style of architecture. Many elements are the result of Civilian Conservation Corps work in the 1930s, which often incorporated creative, craftsman style details.

As the corridor transitions from the forest of Deception Pass State Park to the burgeoning community of Oak Harbor the character changes dramatically to a developed, urban environment. Oak Harbor citizens have gone through a visioning process to

determine how the character of the community could be enhanced and made more attractive for tourists, businesses, and residents. The Design Assistance Team created a document to help make positive design change in Oak Harbor. This document shows proposed changes to Pioneer Way and the potential for making a connection to historic downtown Oak Harbor from State Route 20.

The waterfront is Oak Harbor's best asset and it is currently underutilized. The waterfront should connect to downtown. New buildings along Pioneer Way should be designed and based on existing architecture, scale, and most importantly, the pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

The City of Oak Harbor also regulates the design of signing, site development, landscaping, and other aspects through the City Zoning Code.

Central Whidbey

Ebey's National Historic Reserve was established to “preserve and protect a rural community, which provides an unbroken historical record.” Ebey's Landing encompasses 17,400 acres of coastal strip, prairies, woodland, uplands, and Penn Cove, thereby

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character

covering most of central Whidbey. Within this district, historic block houses, barns, farm houses, bungalows, cottages, and other prominent historical structures are still intact, and these elements represent the story of the settlement of this area, a central piece of the byway's history. 90 percent of Ebey's National Historic Reserve is in private ownership but the Central Whidbey Historic Advisory Committee, a design review board, assists local and county jurisdictions with review of historic buildings and structures located on the reserve. Any addition, remodel, or new construction in the Ebey's Reserve boundary is required to go through the design review process. This helps ensure that designs are compatible and consistent with the architectural style of central Whidbey.

Ebey's Reserve has several documents that provide design suggestions and guidelines for the reserve. The design guidelines for the reserve are a reflection of the landscape. The "Visual Compatibility Guidelines" provides in-depth design standards for signs, waysides, bollards, block houses, fences, etc. for the reserve. "Design Considerations for Historic Properties," presented in a newspaper foldout format, outlines design considerations for the cultural landscape, barns, outbuildings,

residential structures, commercial structures, new construction, and recommendations for remodeling materials.

The cultural landscape of Ebey's Reserve and Central Whidbey is a place unlike any in the country its efforts related to land ownership, land management, and land preservation. It will be essential to continue preserving the cultural and natural landscape along the view corridors surrounding the reserve. More discussion on recommendations for Ebey's Reserve is discussed later in this section.

South Whidbey

The community of Freeland has created design standards for development within its sphere of influence. The objective of these standards is to "establish predictable and defined land use patterns that support the community vision, building a sense of community, improve and encourage economic development, protect environmental quality, and enhance the unique visual identity of the Freeland community." The design standards include recommendations for building heights, setbacks, visual appeal, and open space for new development. This document also examines parking, pedestrian-scale



Whidbey's popularity could, of course, engender its destruction—which is why the inhabitants have taken up protecting what they love here, from the island's social and economic diversity to its living traditions.

Smithsonian Institution. Destination America: Living Tradition. May 2004

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character



design, architectural elements, and signage.

The Freeland area sub-committee also recommends creating a Highway Corridor Overlay Zone in Freeland for SR 525. The goal of the Overlay Zone is to consolidate access for businesses while seeking to add trails, paths, and sidewalks to better connect pedestrian and bicycle environments, ultimately producing a safer community. It is recommended that the Overlay Zone also address commercial design along the highway including setbacks, screening, and the need to preserve and maintain mature trees and landscaping.



Bayview Corner, in south Whidbey, is an excellent example of development that blends into the character of the rural environment. Bayview Corner was designed and renovated with an environmentally-sensitive design that includes geo-block parking lots, permeable asphalt walkways, waterless restroom facilities, composting toilets, water-cleaning aquatic plants and creative ways to recycle graywater (source: <http://www.bayviewfarm-garden.com/LPerennialTemplate.asp?cid=611>).

The byway transitions to the gateway community of Clinton in South Whidbey,

an unincorporated town that is a hub of activity surrounding the ferry terminal. The architectural character of Clinton is a mix of Post WW II architecture and modern commercial and industrial buildings. There are no specific design guidelines in place for Clinton, but the town and other unincorporated areas along the byway are regulated by Island County code with regard to signing, landscaping, site development, and other requirements.

Recommended Design and Development Guidelines

General Recommendations

Given that these are only guidelines and not regulatory, there is a strong need to involve residents, property owners, and businesses along the byway in being “good stewards” of the byway.

Citizens should be provided with educational information on preservation and enhancement ideas for their property. Brochures and/or pamphlets could be mailed to property owners and contain information on a variety of information including the importance of native vegetation and where to find native plants, information about public transit, etc.

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character

Another way to involve residents would be to create an “annual awards program” that would recognize property owners, businesses, etc. who help preserve corridor resources or develop properties using good design techniques, including green building and resource conservation efforts.

North Whidbey

Deception Pass State Park

New improvements along this segment of the byway should be designed in context with the forested character of the state park. Features, such as a new byway gateway sign, roadside pull-off areas with interpretation, and other improvements, should minimize intrusion into the landscape and be designed in such a way to reflect the rustic Cascadian style of park buildings constructed during the CCC era. The gateway sign should be designed to incorporate timber and mortared stone, like the existing historic guardrails along State Route 20. Figure 8.1 shows a design for the north gateway. Design for the gateway and other elements, such as waysides, interpretive signs, etc. should be coordinated with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and Washington State Department of Transportation.

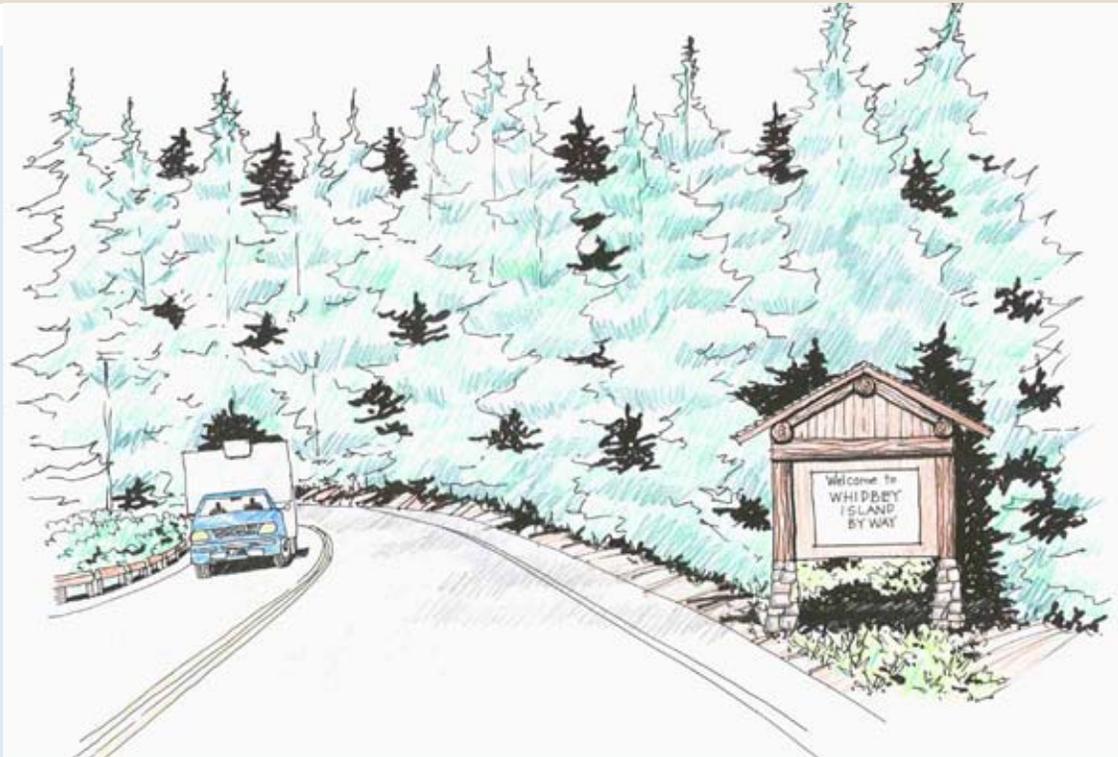


Figure 8.1: Deception Pass Gateway Sign Concept

Scenic Vistas, Overlooks, and Waysides along State Route 20

Structures located along State Route 20 between Deception Pass State Park and Oak Harbor should remain relatively low in height and scale to help preserve the beautiful views along this stretch of the highway. Native landscaping, trees, and shrubs adjacent to the highway could be installed to screen some existing commercial and residential structures.

“By the 1930s there were campaigns to save elements of the island environment that seemed on the point of vanishing.”

White, Richard. Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980. 148.

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character

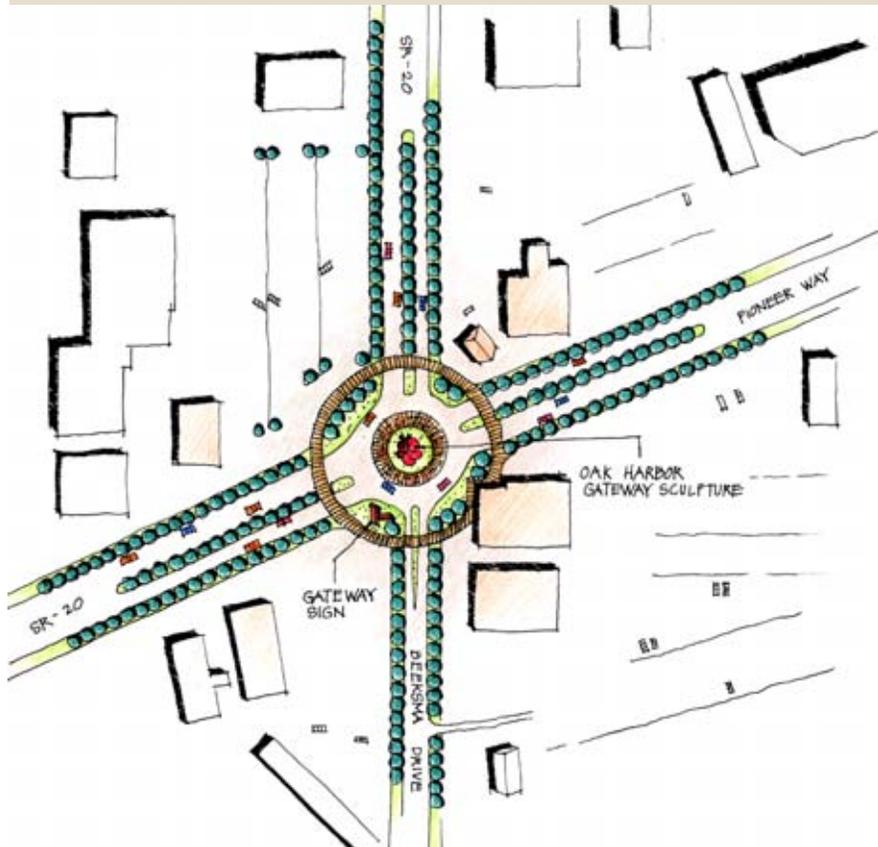


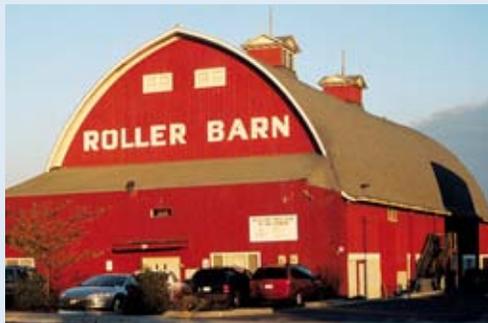
Figure 8.2: Corridor Enhancement Concept for Oak Harbor

Any interpretive panels and kiosks developed in this area should be consistent in design with existing interpretation at Deception Pass State Park. Mature trees in the right-of-way should also be preserved. Coordination with property owners and incentives to preserve land adjacent to the corridor is encouraged. Scenic easements could be purchased to protect land adjacent to the corridor and preserve viewsheds.

Oak Harbor

Development along the byway through Oak Harbor should incorporate the design recommendations from the “Harbor Pride: A Blueprint for Change,” as know as the “DAT” document. The recommendations in this document provide a solid foundation for positive change to Oak Harbor.

The intersection of State Route 20 and Pioneer Way is a key point along the byway. It is recommended that improvements be made to this intersection to encourage people to travel off of the corridor and into downtown Oak Harbor. Figure 8.2 depicts the intersection with a roundabout. The roundabout maximizes mobility, slowing traffic that continuously moves through the intersection. Byway travelers in the roundabout have the choice of either proceeding on their journey or continuing round to access Pioneer Way and the waterfront/downtown. Design guidelines for Pioneer Way, as shown in the DAT should be followed to create an inviting downtown where visitors and residents will want to shop, eat, and stroll down to the waterfront. A waterfront connection is a vital component to the success of downtown and water amenities like the city dock, pedestrian path, and beach.



An important aspect of this area is the existing native vegetation along the roadside. With any new highway development, WSDOT should coordinate with the Byway Committee and others to ensure that as much native vegetation and natural slopes are retained as possible.

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character

Improvements along State Route 20 through Oak Harbor are also recommended. Planted medians, street trees, and landscaping could “soften” the urban landscape. Public art and wayfinding signs could also help to enhance this segment of the byway. Bike lanes are also encouraged through Oak Harbor. Adding these amenities to SR 20 would slow traffic down and create a safer, less congested experience for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Central Whidbey

San De Fuca and Penn Cove

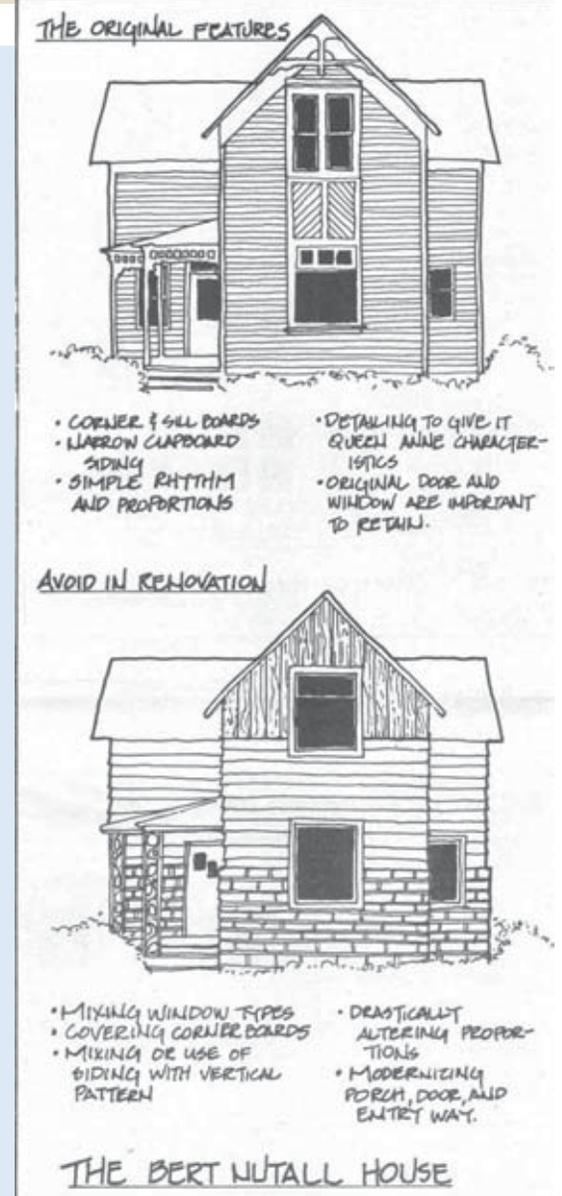
There are several prominent historical structures in San De Fuca that should be preserved, including the old school house. These structures tell the story of settlers in the Penn Cove area. Interpretation is recommended for San De Fuca and Penn Cove. The design of interpretive elements should be consistent with existing interpretive panels, waysides, and overlooks for Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

The corridor through this area provides one of the most spectacular experiences of the entire byway. Roadway character should remain similar to its condition today. Speed limits could be reduced

and enforced to increase safety. Also, viewsheds should be maintained in their current state as much as possible. Any new improvements to the highway should be closely coordinated with the Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve, the Byway Committee, and other local interests. Roadway improvement design should seek to retain and restore natural landscapes and slopes along the byway as much as possible.

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

The reserve already has guidelines in place to help preserve the cultural landscape of central Whidbey. It is recommended that Ebey's Reserve continue to require design review and encourage developers to preserve historical buildings and structures. Ebey's Reserve should continue to acquire scenic easements and work with surrounding partners, including Washington State Parks, Whidbey-Camano Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and others to preserve as much of the land in central Whidbey as possible. The “working family farm” is becoming lost in American culture. The natural and cultural landscape of Ebey's Reserve is a rare experience in this country and should be preserved for generations. Interpretive elements



Ebey's Landing NHR. Design Considerations for Historic Properties

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character



should be designed to be compatible with the design of existing facilities and the design guidelines for the Reserve. Coordination between Ebey's Reserve and State Parks is encouraged to further develop a design standard to be used on lands under the jurisdiction of both agencies or in proximity to each other.

Coupeville

Commercial and residential design in Coupeville should continue going through the design review process and the design style and character of features along the byway should be consistent with the design guidelines for the town and Ebey's Reserve. New development is encouraged to be compatible with the historic architectural elements.

Residential structures in Coupeville should follow existing style of vernacular farmhouse: Italianate, Queen Anne, bungalow, and cottage. Remodels are encouraged to restore structures to their original condition through usage of materials and colors. Context and scale should be considered in commercial developments.

Coupeville to Greenbank

Much of the character of the corridor from Coupeville to Greenbank includes mature trees and shrubs mixed with pockets of rural development. The

roadside character should be retained in its existing condition as much as possible through this area. Native plantings such as low-lying shrub and rhododendrons should be planted in the right-of-way to reinforce the natural vegetation edge along the byway. The design of the Lake Hancock overlook should be compatible with the historical architecture of Greenbank Farm. Greenbank Farm is a gem along the corridor that should always be preserved and protected.

South Whidbey

Greenbank to Freeland

This portion of the roadway is mostly a forested corridor with a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees. Roadside character along this portion of the byway should be retained in a forested condition. New development should be encouraged to be setback off the highway to continue the forested corridor. Native low-lying planting and shrubs should be planted in the right-of-way along the byway to enhance the natural vegetative edge.

The phone booth located in this portion of the corridor should be protected and maintained. This phone booth is a cultural icon along the byway. An interpretive panel could be added near the phone booth telling the story of the its historical use and location, which



8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character

represents the dividing line between north and south portions of the island. An informal parking lot should be developed along with the interpretive wayside display to provide a safe pull-off area for travelers.

Freeland

Design and development guidelines for Freeland have already been created. The Freeland Design Review document should be incorporated into Island County's Comprehensive Plan. The Highway Corridor Overlay Zone provides a blueprint for design along State Route 525. This zone will help to enhance the character of Freeland and provide a basis for preserving the rural, neo-traditional character of the community. Beautification efforts should be considered in all Freeland development projects.

Freeland to Clinton

The character of the roadway from Freeland to Clinton includes forests, rural development, farmlands, rolling hills, mountain views, marshes, wetlands, and pockets of rural and urban development. A recent decision by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will eliminate herbicide use in the right-of-way for most of this area of the corridor. According to

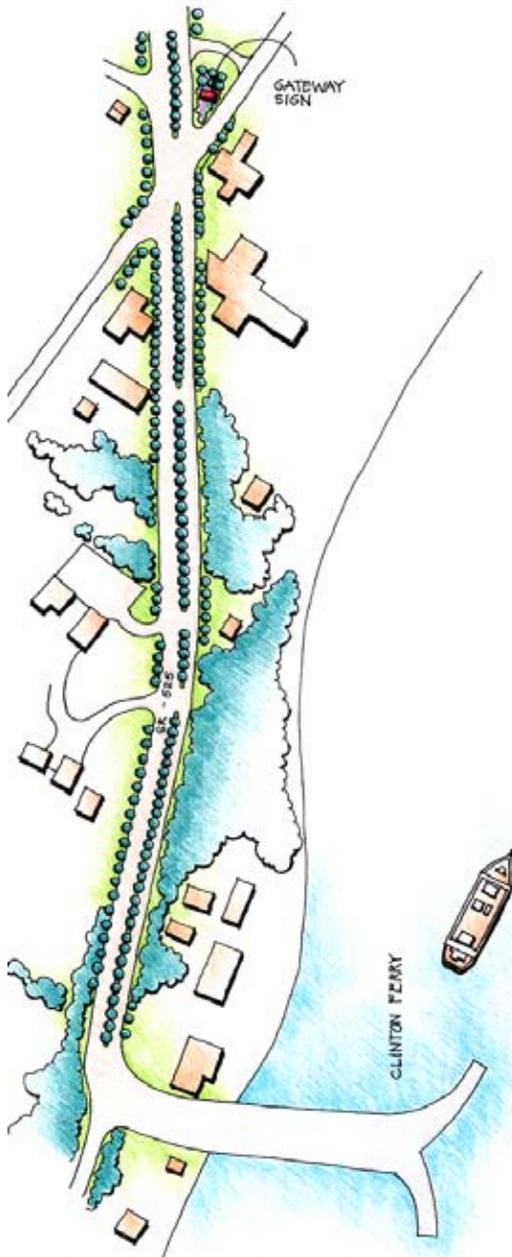
WSDOT, this new plan means that in many areas grass will be allowed to grow up to the edge of the highway surface instead of keeping the typical three-foot plant-free buffer. With spring underway island residents can expect to see WSDOT crews mowing, pulling weeds and trees, planting native plants and judiciously using herbicides. WSDOT's plan is instrumental in protecting the natural resources along the corridor and providing a better experience for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Pedestrian improvements should be installed in this area to provide better connections to transit service on State Route 525. Currently, proper crossings do not exist in some areas of this roadway. People will take transit if it is easy and safe to access.



Photo by Larry Webster

8. Preserving and Enhancing the Byway's Character



Clinton

Clinton is one of the gateways of the byway, through which roughly two million cars per year travel. Improvements to State Route 525 through Clinton should be completed to enhance the gateway experience for byway travelers. Improvements could include a planted median along with additional street trees and landscaping. Also, a byway gateway sign should be located in Clinton, perhaps at the top of the hill at an overlook point/wayside pull-off area on the right side of the highway. Figure 8.3 shows a conceptual plan of State Route 525 through Whidbey. Improvements for increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility are also encouraged. This includes improved crossings and intersection signals. WSDOT is currently making changes to southbound ferry lanes including the addition of a wider shoulder. Other amenities for Clinton could include increased

landscaping along the byway, public art, and wayfinding signs. The Clinton community and Island County should work closely together to evaluate existing design requirements for this area and develop a new sub-area plan with design guidelines that recommend specific character requirements, such as setbacks, parking design, and controlled access along the byway.

A park design for the port property adjacent to the ferry terminal is currently underway. Pedestrian access to this park should be considered an important element of the design. Local residents should feel welcome and encouraged to use the park and beach, and byway visitors could start their island experience here, particularly if an information kiosk was incorporated into the design.

Corridor Enhancement Concept for Clinton

Signaling and Wayfinding

Introduction

Signaling along the byway should effectively communicate information to travelers while minimizing adverse impacts on the scenic values of the corridor. Signs serve many different functions; they identify, inform, warn, advertise, direct, describe, and explain. The purpose of this Signaling and Wayfinding Program is to identify existing excessive signage along the byway and potential for additional signage.

Developing a unified and coordinated approach to signaling on the byway will help reinforce the identity of the corridor, assist the traveler with wayfinding, and minimize intrusions on the scenic values of the corridor. All signs should be easy to read and clearly convey the intended information. Signs must be carefully designed and installed in accordance with all applicable requirements to avoid creating hazards to drivers and bicyclists. Additional signs added along the byway should be carefully designed and placed to minimize intrusions on the scenic experience. Signs along the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way should be attractive and

informational. Redundant signs should be avoided. Where possible, signs should be consolidated to one location. Signs should identify and provide direction to points of interest and intrinsic qualities of the byway, but not necessarily all places and businesses along the corridor.

This section includes existing signage that could be removed, consolidated, or improved while recommending areas where additional signage, such as byway and trail signs, could enhance the corridor. All aspects of this Signaling and Wayfinding Program should be closely coordinated with the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), as well as other state, county, and local agencies as appropriate.

Types of Signs

The Signaling and Wayfinding Program addresses several types of signs for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way:

- Existing signs along the byway
- Gateway signs
- Scenic byway logo signs
- Directional guide signs
- Supplemental guide signs
- Interpretive signs/panels and historic



9. Signing and Wayfinding



Remove some signs



Remove or consolidate



Remove old signs

- markers
- Special feature/name place signs

Regulatory signs that serve a safety purpose are regulated by federal and state agencies and organizations, including the Federal Highway Administration, the American Association of State Highway Officials, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and Washington State Department of Transportation. As such, this plan does not address regulatory types of signs, other than to request that the agencies responsible for these signs consider opportunities to minimize, consolidate, and eliminate signs as much as possible.

Signing Recommendations

Recommendations for existing signs along the byway, as well as for additional signs, are described below.

Existing Signs Along the Byway

Existing signs along the byway should be consolidated as much as possible. There are many signs throughout the byway that could be added to existing signs or removed altogether. Below is a summary of signing recommendations along the corridor that could be consolidated or removed. The inventory also shows

examples of signs that are sensitive to the scenic character of the byway.

Ferry Terminal Signs

There are many ferry terminal signs when approaching Clinton, some of these signs could be consolidated.

Tourist Activities

These signs could be removed or consolidated. There are other ways to advertise activities for tourists.

Old Signage

There are signs that could be eliminated from the byway, such as the sign shown on the left.

Private Businesses

There are many examples of private business signs that blend into the environment. Here are some examples:



Gateway Signs

Gateway signs should be located at or near the beginning of the scenic byway to notify travelers that they are entering the byway. These signs typically include the byway logo, possibly in a larger size, and may be attached to a welcome panel/structure. There may be landscaping or other features, such as timber columns or stone bases installed as part of the gateway feature.

Some byways (such as the Cascade Loop and Stevens Pass) have installed “gateway” signs that consist of a larger standard highway sign with a green background. However, gateway signs designed and constructed to carefully blend with the natural settings of Whidbey Island are recommended for this byway. Gateway signs may be backlit, bottom-lit, or reflectorized for night visibility. Refer to WSDOT’s Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines for additional design considerations. Coordination with WSDOT on the design of gateway signs is important.

Gateway signs for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way should be placed at the three gateways to the byway: Clinton, Keystone, and Deception Pass State Park. Smaller signs could also be placed with the logo, name, and tagline, such as

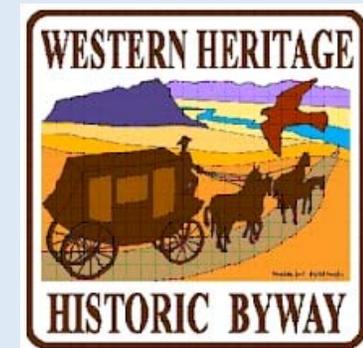
“Welcome to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way - slow down, relax, you’re on Island Time” or “Welcome to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way - where majestic mountain vistas and tranquil waters await you.” A gateway is the community’s front door to the world, thus the design should leave a lasting impression that would be memorable.

Scenic Byway Logo Signs

Scenic byway logo signs identify the significance of the corridor as a scenic byway to travelers and may also identify it as a historically, culturally, and/or educationally significant route.

Byway logo signs consist of the byway logo which is sometimes depicted on a shield or plaque affixed to a standard post sign. The sign may be accompanied by highway route markers or other directional signage affixed to the same post. The minimum suggested size for the sign is 24 inches by 24 inches, and the sign should be reflectorized for night visibility.

The logo design for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way should be placed at various locations along the corridor at intervals of about 10 to 15 miles. Where possible, logo signs can be added to existing sign posts that already hold a directional sign. Consolidating signs along the



9. Signing and Wayfinding



corridor will help to minimize visual intrusion

The scenic byway logo could be designed/ developed by the residents of Whidbey Island. A competition among local artists, school children, or other groups would spur interest in the project. Residents could vote on the byway logo sign.

Directional Guide/Advance Notice Signs

Directional guide signs direct and orient visitors to their destinations along the corridor. These signs assist corridor visitors with wayfinding and identify points of interest located along the corridor or off the main route.

Directional signs identify recreational opportunities, visitor services and facilities, cultural and historic sites, and other destinations and attraction along the corridor, such as recreational and historic sites.

Blue and white information signs and brown and white recreational signs are included in this category. These signs are typically placed in advance of these sites and sometimes include a reference to the distance to the point of interest (i.e. "Heritage Marker - 1/4 mile ahead" with an arrow).



Directional signs should be highly visible and constructed for long-term durability in accordance with all applicable standards.

The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way already contains many directional signs. A full assessment of these signs should be done before choosing where to place additional signs and to determine if some of these signs could be consolidated.

There are many blue and white signs along the corridor that provide an "advertising" function, aimed to direct visitors to various businesses. In order to minimize visual intrusion along the scenic byway these signs should be consolidated so all businesses are on one sign if the businesses are in the same general direction. WSDOT should consider the possibility of eliminating this program on Whidbey Island as a pilot program to implement model scenic byway signing. There are other potential negative consequences of these signs in addition to visual intrusion, such as increased competition among businesses (adding more signs); and redundancy in signs (some businesses may have multiple signs). Also, the overall size of the blue and white sign is large in scale to other highway signing, and in some cases, there are large blank areas on the blue signs that are unused because not

enough businesses are advertising.

Additional directional signs along the byway may detract from the visitor experience by cluttering the byway. Some signs directing visitors could be consolidated. For instance, signs directing visitors to Crockett Lake, Keystone Ferry, and Fort Casey State Park could be on one sign.

Additional directional signage for public transit stops and park and ride lots is encouraged.

Supplemental Guide Signs

Supplemental guide signs direct visitors to the byway from intersections with other state routes or major roadways. These signs would be useful in Mukilteo, Port Townsend, and Anacortes – the three adjoining destinations leading to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way. These signs typically have a green background and must be designed in compliance with WSDOT requirements. It may be possible to include reference to the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way (logo signs) on these signs.

Interpretive Signs and Historic/Heritage Markers

Interpretive signs, panels, and kiosks

communicate something about distinctive places and events that either currently exist or that existed in the past along the corridor. Interpretive signs are typically tied together with a unifying style that is recognizable as a design element throughout the byway to reflect an overall theme for the byway.

Interpretive signs and the structures that support the signs should be constructed of materials that complement the natural and cultural elements unique to the byway. Interpretive signs should be responsive to context, setting, and special qualities of the sites, yet still provide unity to the overall byway system.

Historic/heritage markers include signs or monuments that have been installed to mark a historical event. These signs usually provide less detail and illustration than an interpretive sign/panel.

Interpretive wayside exhibits are an excellent medium to tell travelers about the intrinsic values of the corridor. Multiple exhibits throughout the corridor can be used to link various sites together through a strong theme and consistent design. Interpretive information can also be displayed on larger kiosks, along with traveler



9. Signing and Wayfinding



information and maps.

The corridor logo could be included in a smaller size on the interpretive elements. Displays should use a consistent color scheme, format and type style. Waysides and interpretive exhibits could follow the same design as existing panels used throughout the byway in state parks and Ebey's Landing.

Design of interpretive panels and displays should comply with the National Park Service Wayside Design Guidelines, which include standards related to accessibility. Refer to the *Telling the Byway's Story* for more information on where interpretation should be located along the corridor.

Special Feature/ Place Name Signs

Special features and place names could be identified along the corridor with small signs. These small signs could be placed in the right-of-way or on private property with the permission of property owners. Examples of these signs for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way include signing the different flora and fauna present along the byway to help educate byway travelers of the native vegetation. These signs could also recognize agricultural growing (crops) along the byway.

Streams, lakes, bogs, wetlands, and other natural features could also be identified with small, discreetly designed and placed signs.

Milepost Markers

WSDOT provides milepost markers along the byway corridor. However, it may be desirable to consider replacing these with more context sensitive milepost markers and to provide additional milepost markers for consistency. Milepost markers could be important for developing an integrated interpretive plan and informational brochure. Interpretive areas and other areas of significant interest could then be easily identified, referenced in the publication, and readily located on the ground.

Implementing the Signing and Wayfinding Program

Overall Benefits

The recommended Signing and Wayfinding Program will provide travelers and residents with an informative and attractive series of signs along the byway that will supplement the existing signs, including regulatory and advisory signs. Consolidation of existing and potential future signs will help minimize visual intrusion. Removal of unnecessary signs

and the adoption of specific signing regulations at the local level should be considered. The use of byway logo on gateway signs help to make visitors aware they are on the scenic byway.

Reducing “Sign Clutter”

Implementing a Signing and Wayfinding Program provides an opportunity to avoid the overuse of signs, which can create “sign clutter” along the corridor. Careful consideration should be given to where to eliminate redundant information and directional signs and where to consolidate signs. Where possible and practical, multiple signs can be located on a single sign post, as long as the information presented still conveys a clear message. As signs are replaced due to maintenance they should be consolidated where feasible.

As a means of avoiding the overuse of signs along the corridor directions to less prominent destination and attractions could be provided in brochures, pamphlets, and other information available at visitor information centers.

A comprehensive inventory of existing signs along the byway should be completed. This inventory should address signs that should be consolidated or removed. Potential signs

that need to be considered for removal, if possible include:

- Adopt-a-highway litter management signs
- Fire danger level signs
- Business advertising signs (WSDOT blue and white signs)
- Abandoned signs
- Duplicate signs “Do Not Block”
- “Do Not Drink and Drive” signs
- “Burn Barrels are Illegal in Island County” signs

Although some of these signs contain important public information, there may be more appropriate ways to get the message out. Local jurisdictions, such as Island County, the City of Oak Harbor, and the Town of Coupeville should review existing signing ordinances to determine if the requirements and guidelines will provide the best possible scenario for design and placement of signs to minimize visual intrusion and be set in context.

Signing Program Process

The basic steps for designing and installing the types of signs described earlier in this section are as follows:

1. Confirm identity, logo, and gateway designs to be used on the corridor;



9. Signing and Wayfinding



2. Assign a "Signing and Wayfinding" subcommittee for the byway with members who can focus on signing analysis, needs, and design suggestions;
3. Develop a coordinated signing plan that includes adding, consolidating, and removing signs;
4. Coordinate and work with WSDOT on the addition, consolidation, and/or removal of signs;
5. Pursue funding from the Federal

Highway Administration National Scenic Byway Program and/or other sources to implement the signing plan;

6. Finalize design of additional signs (see WSDOT's Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines);
7. Coordinate the manufacture and installation of the signs with WSDOT; and
8. Continue on-going coordination with WSDOT during sign maintenance.

Signing Design Regulations

All signing located within the SR 20 and SR 525 right-of-way will need to be coordinated with WSDOT.

The WSDOT Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines contain design ideas that can be used for the corridor. Some types of sign, including directional guide signs and supplemental guide signs will need to be designed and installed in accordance with the USDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the WSDOT traffic Manual, as well as the WSDOT Sign Fabrication and the WSDOT Design Manual.

Compliance with Outdoor Advertising Controls

- The Federal Highway Administration requires outdoor advertising controls for designated scenic byways and specifically prohibits billboards in Washington. The Scenic Vistas Act of 1971, Chapter 47.42 RCW and Chapter 469-66 WAC, were enacted to promote and protect the natural beauty of areas adjacent to officially designated state scenic and recreational highways, as well as primary and interstate highways. The purpose of the Scenic Vistas Act was to promote the public

health, safety, welfare, convenience, and enjoyment of public travel. The existence of the Scenic Vistas Act ensures that the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way will be in compliance with the FHWA requirement of no billboards and outdoor advertising controls. Local regulations at the county and city level also regulate outdoor advertising.

Specific Outdoor Advertising Controls of the Scenic Vistas Act

On-premise advertising signs are specifically regulated by the Scenic Vistas Act. An on-premise sign advertises an activity conducted on the property on which the sign is located. This type of sign is limited to identifying the establishment or the principal or additional products or services offered on the property.

All signing must comply with applicable governmental regulations and signs must be located in accordance with WSDOT standards for clear zones adjacent to the highway.

Other Applicable Regulations

In addition to Scenic Vistas Act requirements, state scenic, primary and interstate highways must comply with the Highway Beautification Act, Title 23 U.S.C., Section 131.

In addition to the federal and state laws related to the placement of outdoor advertising that are administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation, local governments along the corridor regulate signing and advertising through local ordinances.

All property owners are expected to comply with local, state, and federal regulations for outdoor advertising control along the corridor. Compliance with outdoor advertising requirements, in accordance with the provisions of the Scenic Vistas Act and other signing regulations, is verified on a regular basis by local authorities and WSDOT outdoor advertising inspectors and maintenance workers.

For more information related to existing advertising and signing controls and guidelines refer to the following publications.

- WSDOT Highway Advertising Control: Scenic Vistas Act
- WSDOT Highway Advertising Control: Motorist Information Signs
- Island County Zoning Code
- Oak Harbor Zoning Code
- Coupeville Zoning Code
- Historic Preservation Codes





Marketing and Promoting the Byway



Photo by M.B. Peters

Introduction

Marketing and promotional strategies, programs, and projects will help attract more visitors to the area, but also can be valuable tools in managing visitors and conveying important messages to the traveling public. Along with marketing and promotional opportunities, there is a responsibility to educate visitors about

the important resources, private lands, sensitive sites, view corridors, and intrinsic qualities of the corridor. Encouraging stewardship and conservation of these resources and qualities should be an integral component of promotional programs related to the corridor, for both the visitors and residents who enjoy the qualities of Whidbey Island.

Marketing and promotion of the byway can result in direct economic benefits to Whidbey Island. More travel translates to more shopping, more overnight stays, more jobs, and more revenue generated by sales and hotel/motel tax.

Promotional efforts should be aimed at existing businesses, restaurants, shops, galleries, and motels, hotels, and bed

10. Marketing and Promoting the Byway



and breakfasts. The abundance of locally-owned establishments is part of the charm on Whidbey Island and should be promoted as such.

Marketing plans should involve the public as much as possible. Including interested citizens, local businesses, public agencies, and special interest groups will increase support for the program. Continual efforts should be made to notify the public of corridor meetings, inform them of progress on the project, and invite their input at each step of the way.

The Target Market

As noted earlier, the majority of visitors to Whidbey Island are from the Puget Sound region including King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Skagit counties. An increasing number of visitors come to Whidbey Island from around the country and the world. With additional marketing and promotion, the level of visitors from outside the area will increase even more. Is Whidbey Island ready for increased visitation? This marketing and promotions plan, along with the corridor management plan as a whole, will help to ensure that the byway is better equipped to handle increasing numbers of visitors.

Below is a list of activities people engage in while visiting Whidbey Island:

- Driving/sight-seeing tour
- Hiking and walking opportunities
- Bicycling
- Learning about history, culture, and natural resources (interpretation)
- Family outings and picnics
- Shopping
- Birding
- Cultural events (parades, festivals, races, etc.)
- Fishing and clamming
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Kite flying
- Garden viewing
- Camping
- Sailing

Marketing Objectives and Strategies

Objectives and strategies for marketing and promoting the byway are listed below.

Objectives

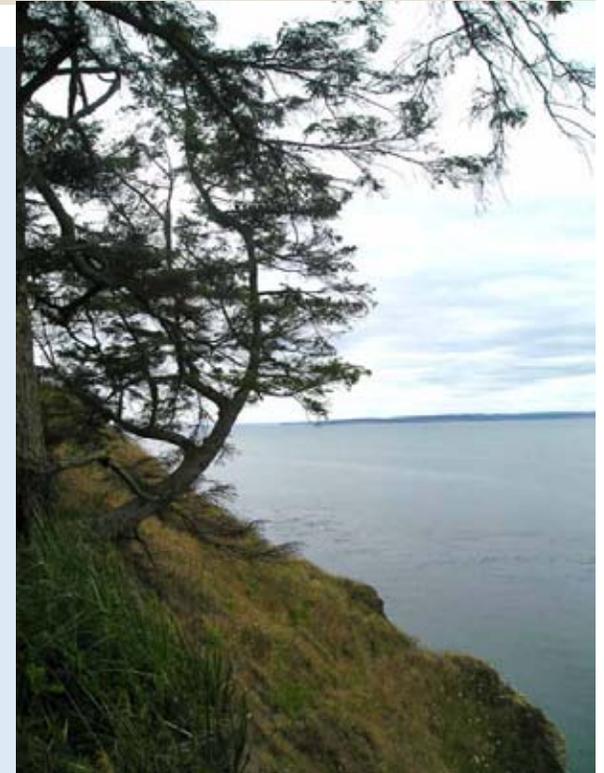
- Create partnerships, collaboration, and cooperation between byway communities;
- Continue relationships with existing efforts to promote Whidbey Island;



- Develop new efforts to use the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way designation as a marketing tool;
- Encourage public and private partnerships in economic and tourism planning and development; and
- Generate and identify funding opportunities for marketing and promotional activities.

General Strategies

- Promote Whidbey Island as:
 - A scenic island of green forests with miles of coastlines, beaches, and natural tidelands;
 - A quiet place with friendly people, a mild climate, and year-round activities;
 - A recreational destination with one national, five state, numerous county and port district parks with water access, and a variety of accommodations;
 - A place with rural character where wildlife and birds abound;
 - A location at the mouth of the Puget Sound inland sea for boating, fishing, and whale watching; and
 - A place to explore nature, find adventure along the byway and nearby trails, be awed by the views of Puget Sound and both the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges, find solitude in the surroundings, and see a glimpse of Washington's past.
- Promote the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way as the only island byway in the country. It begins on the south end with the largest ferry system in the United States and is accessible entirely by transit.
- Promote the byway's intrinsic qualities while educating both residents and visitors on the importance of preserving and enhancing those qualities.
- Retain the byway committee made up of various groups, businesses, organization, and government representatives after the development of this plan with goals that should be:
 - Scenic conservation and view corridor planning,
 - Identifying the benefits of trails and greenways for visitors and wellness,
 - Vegetation restoration,
 - Visitor management planning to minimize impact on local resources, and
 - Enhancement of community pride.



10. Marketing and Promoting the Byway

“Of course, doing nothing here takes several deceptively active forms - reading, golfing, beachcombing, rollerskating, swimming, shopping, hiking, dining, & more - the difference is in enjoying these activities in an environment that demands absolutely nothing of you.”

www.donothinghere.com

- Develop partnerships to encourage public and private interests to maintain the long-term viability of this plan.
- Work with the environmental organizations on the island to promote the CMP’s educational and stewardship messages.
- Partner with local schools and involve the students in programs and projects that achieve byway goals, objectives, and strategies. This will help promote the byway on a local level.
- Organize an annual event to promote the byway and include invitations to local and state politicians.
- Identify methods to be used for public information such as a website, brochures or visitor guides, kiosks, welcome centers at the island gateways, telephone access for visitor information, alliances with other organizations, such as Cascade Loop, and cooperative advertising.
- Submit grant proposals to generate funding to implement the identified projects and support the current initiative beyond the fall of 2004.
- Seek funding from existing businesses, organizations, and local governments to implement short-term projects and plans to sustain byway momentum.
- Maintain contact with the Washington State Department of Transportation’s

Byway Program in order to identify possible partnerships and funding opportunities.

Marketing Strategies and Tools

There are several specific marketing strategies and tools that could be used for the byway. The list of strategies above are more general in nature. More specific strategies and tools to effectively promote the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way are presented below.

Specific Marketing Strategies

Target Existing Visitors

Deception Pass State Park has more than two million annual visitors, while Fort Ebey State Park receives about 700,000 annual visitors. The byway plan includes provisions for dispersing visitors to other parts of the island to relieve congestion and the resulting impact occurring at the “loved to death” locations of the island.

The “island experience” of the byway could be promoted more strongly. Visitors could begin their journey with ferry crossings on the “marine highway” and then visitors could travel north to Deception Pass. This would bring visitors to other areas of the island and allow more economic opportunities for businesses along the byway.

Promote the Shoulder Season

Whidbey Island is already busy and bustling during the summer months. The byway should be promoted as a “year-around” destination. The rain shadow effect should be promoted in the Puget Sound region. Hiking, birding, biking, and fishing are year-around activities on Whidbey. Market Whidbey Island as the “Best Kept Winter Secret.”

Promote Shorelines, Beaches, and Marine Resources

Much of Whidbey Island’s history, culture, scenic quality, and recreation include water. It will be important to promote these aquatic stories and the role of water transportation, including ferries, boats, kayaks, and possible return of fleet water taxis to Whidbey Island.

Leave your Car at Home

The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way is perhaps the only byway entirely accessible by transit. This should be a promotional point for visitors to the island. “Leave your car home and hop aboard Island Transit.”

Promote Safety

There are opportunities to promote safety along the byway from travelers,

bicyclists, and pedestrians. A campaign slogan could be added to signs along the byway such as “Slow down and enjoy the Whidbey Experience.” A “Share the Road” campaign would educate drivers of the presence of bicyclists on the roadway. Use of “Pedestrian Crossing” signs and other traffic calming improvements at intersections and areas near bus stops would alert drivers of pedestrians.

Eco-tourism

What is eco-tourism? According to the International Eco-tourism Society it is “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” The Whidbey Scenic Isle Way could be marketed as an eco-tourism destination. People from all over the world travel to areas specifically to experience natural areas that are protected and cherished by those who live near the resources. Eco-tourists have an appreciation and respect for the natural environment, and these are the types of visitors Whidbey Island should attract.

Marketing and Promotions Tools

Interpretive Plans

Interpretive plans have already been created for several of the state parks and



Photo by Helen Chatfield-Weeks

"It's easy to get here, but difficult to leave. The prettiest seaside towns look across the water to mountains lit up in the afternoon sun. Charming shops, deluxe accommodations, century-old farms, lighthouses, big trees, tender mussels, and military history are discovered here."

Experience Washington.com
Washington Tourism Council

for Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. A cohesive approach to interpreting the byway is envisioned, which would integrate the ideas, themes, and projects identified in existing plans. See Section 6 of this plan, Telling the Byway's Story, for more information about the interpretive plan.

Interpretive Guide and Map

As a primary promotional piece, the byway organization could develop a full-color brochure in the form of an interpretive guide and map. This brochure could depict a map of the corridor including the following features:

- Intrinsic qualities as identified in Section 3 of this plan;
- Photos of the corridor, including scenic vistas;
- Historic features and related interpretive stories and themes;
- Parks, forests, and other public lands;
- Trailing, camping, hiking, fishing, biking, and other recreational opportunities;
- Interpretive centers and information sites;
- Scenic viewpoints, pullouts, and public restroom facilities; and
- Cultural events and information.

The brochure could also include:

- Calendar of special events,
- Websites and regional contact information, and
- Stewardship messages.

This information may be excessive for one brochure. It may be better to consider one brochure that is oriented toward visitor interpretation and one that is oriented toward recreation and scenic vistas.

Brochures should be professionally designed, produced, and distributed to brochure racks throughout the state at visitor centers, key tourist destinations, hotels, parks, and motor clubs. Brochures could be distributed through travel agencies, tour organizations, Island Transit, chambers of commerce, and other locations.

The brand identity of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way should be reinforced by using the byway's name, logo, and familiar themes and story lines. More information on creating and reinforcing "Brand Identity" is discussed later in this section.

Media Outreach

Involving the media is a very cost-effective way to get the word out to the

public. The media program should include the following elements:

- Develop media contacts: list of newspapers, TV, and radio stations.
- Develop calendar of established special events and invite media to all events.
- Establish new opportunities for news coverage such as ribbon-cuttings, ground-breaking ceremonies, and special byway tours (invite media and public and all involved groups).
- Write and distribute press releases to media list at project milestones; also be sure to distribute newsletters and other project information to the media.
- Encourage local newspapers to do a story on the byway or write a regular column on the byway and related heritage issues.
- Develop a press kit that contains the byway name, logo, themes, story lines, and color photos of spectacular features – make the reporter’s or columnist’s job easier by giving him or her everything he or she needs.
- Put notices of meetings and activities on local radio and television community bulletin boards.
- Promote the byway’s significance to the region and stewardship activities with a locally-produced video or as a guest on local television talk shows or programs.

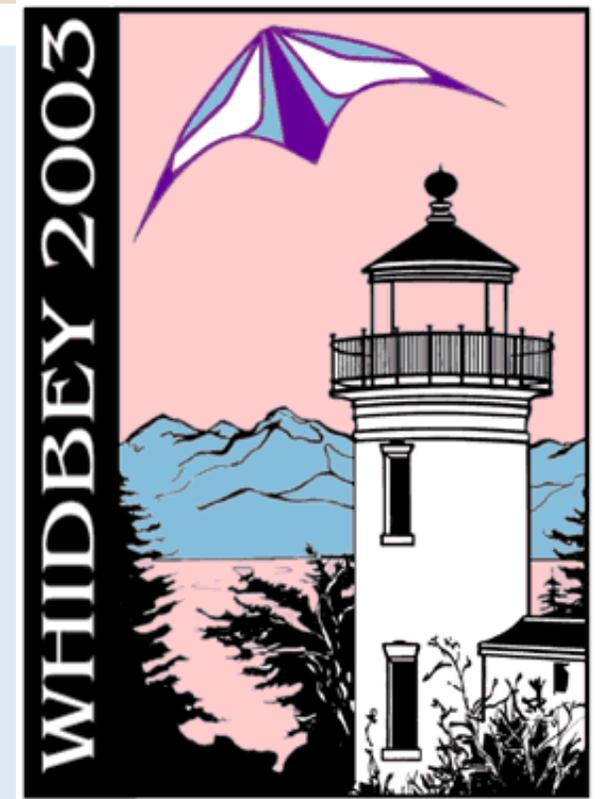
Traveling Display

A freestanding traveling display provides information to a wide variety of people at a relatively low cost. A display could include a byway map, photographs of the byway, and information about key features.

Tailor the design of the display to fit your target audience, as different groups will be interested in different information.

A community-targeted display should feature contact information and ideas about how to get involved and support the program and some enticing pictures showing how fun it is to be a part of the byway partnership! This display could be set up at local retail shops, libraries, schools, community centers, chamber offices, and other public buildings throughout the island.

A marketing and promotional display for a tourism audience would need to highlight the main attractions of the region. This type of display should invite and entice visitors to experience the byway. It may be more sophisticated in design with video and/or audio features. The display could be designed for indoor as well as outdoor environments and then set up in a wide array of locations.



www.whidbeykites.org

10. Marketing and Promoting the Byway



The display could be located at visitor centers, interpretive centers, and other areas along the byway – as well as locations out of the region, including conferences, trade shows, airports, train stations, and transit terminals.

Audio Tape/CD Tour

Audio tape and CD tours provide the benefit of “on-the-go” byway interpretation and education. Travelers can pick up an audio tape or CD at one end of the byway, use it during their trip to learn more about the features they encounter along the way, and then turn in the tape or CD at a destination at the other end of the byway. Tapes and CDs can be a fairly cost effective manner of providing meaningful interpretation and information to visitors on a continual basis. The main themes of the byway can be told throughout the island experience. “Voices” from the byway’s past and present can be reflected in the audio, along with interesting facts and trivia about byway features. Tribal legends, island history, and cultural aspects of the byway can also be interpreted.

Speaker’s Kit

Community members and supporters of the byway can get involved in promoting the byway by developing a brief slide show and presentation. This

presentation can be given at civic groups and community meetings to promote the byway. The speaker’s kit should emphasize the natural beauty of the area, the recreational opportunities available, and suggest ways to support the program. It should include an outline of topics to be covered in a presentation, a slide show of key features along the byway, and the interpretive map to be distributed as a handout. This approach can be particularly useful in the early stages of byway promotion and when there might be specific questions from the audience that need to be answered by a “warm body.”

Design and Post a Website and Place Information on Other Existing Websites

Byway information and scenic photographs can be combined to create a website for the byway. This website could link to the website on scenic highways (“National Scenic Byways Online” www.byways.org). A specific website should be designed for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way to promote associated recreational, tourism, and interpretive opportunities, as well as to educate potential visitors about sensitive resources in the corridor and the need for stewardship.

Links to other local visitor centers, chambers of commerce, and other tourism organizations should be included on the website.

Coordinate with Existing Tourism Promotion Programs

As part of the outreach efforts in promoting the byway, an attempt should be made to inform and coordinate with existing organizations and agencies that have public information components to their organization or agency, such as:

- Local, regional and state tourism organizations, visitors' bureaus, and chambers of commerce,
- Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission,
- National Park Service,
- US Fish and Wildlife Service,
- Educational organizations,
- Recreational/sports facilities,
- Environmental organizations,
- Historical societies, museums, historic preservation groups, and
- Other relevant public agencies, nonprofit, and private organizations.

Form a Subcommittee to Manage the Ongoing Marketing and Promotions Program and Corridor Stewardship Activities

Once the byway organization is expanded and more formally structured, marketing, fund-raising, and other activities may begin to overlap somewhat. In order to accommodate both efforts, subcommittees should be formed and assigned to specific tasks. A Byway Marketing and Promotions Subcommittee can help with several tasks, including overseeing development of brochures, travel guides, displays, media relations, promotional campaigns, and other programs.

Other Helpful Information

A great deal of helpful information and resources are available for the byway organization as it embarks upon marketing and promoting the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way.

Local, Regional, and State Tourism Organizations

The communities along the byway have chambers of commerce. These organizations frequently do research on visitor characteristics to determine how to better attract tourists to the area.



Photo by Helen Chatfield-Weeks

10. Marketing and Promoting the Byway



Many of these organizations are already partners in the byway and will be instrumental in implementing future marketing and promotional efforts. Some of the organizations that have specifically been involved in byway marketing activities to date include:

- Island County Tourism,
- Greater Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce,
- Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce,
- South Whidbey Chamber of Commerce, and
- North Cascade Highway Loop

In addition to local and regional tourism organizations, Washington State Tourism (<http://www.tourism.wa.gov/>) has extensive resources and information to help local communities. This website posts research and visitor statistics information, as well as up-to-date marketing reports.

National Scenic Byways Program

A current feature of the National Scenic Byways Program website, www.byways.org, is a section entitled Branding America's Byways, which contains useful information about brand building, and, most importantly, an extensive *Marketing Toolkit*. The toolkit

contains over 300 pages of helpful advice covering such topics as:

- Moving from product development to marketing;
- Planning Your Party – A Checklist for Marketing Your Byway, which includes fun and helpful advice on “What kind of party should we have? Toga? Luau?” (What is the byway story or theme?);
- Key to marketing terminology;
- Positioning your byway through interpretation;
- Profiling your byway;
- Your Guest List (Identifying Your Target Market Through Research);
- Byway market planning: developing strategies for marketing your byway (includes advertising suggestions);
- Implementing marketing plans;
- Media relations;
- Community awareness; and
- Case studies.

The full toolkit can be downloaded at the website, or is available by contacting the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse at 202-333-8936.

Building a Consistent “Brand Identity” for the Byway

Building an identity for the byway and the byway organization is important. The National Scenic Byway Program

refers to the “branding” process as an opportunity to set a particular byway apart from others. Branding is the act of creating a specific impression in the minds of your target market. Successful branding usually requires a combination of elements, including:

- Byway name,
- Byway story,
- Byway logo,
- Byway organization
- Other elements such as the byway’s partnerships, visitors’ expectations and perceptions, and products offered to visitors.

The byway’s identity should continue to be promoted and reinforced at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. Activities that will reinforce the corridor identity include:

- Using the logo for all outreach and communications materials (letterhead, postcards, bookmarks, business cards, etc.); note: letterhead that includes the logo and corridor name on stationary would be good for official purposes, such as letters of support, funding applications, and endorsement of special programs;
- Distributing a poster or flyer with the byway name and logo;

- Developing and distributing maps and brochures with the byway name and logo;
- Sending out a quarterly or monthly newsletter with the new name and logo;
- Placing articles or notices in newspapers showing the logo; and
- Confirming a formal name for the byway organization, such as the Friends of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way, or the Whidbey Isle Way Partnership, and referring to this name on all communications and collateral associated with the byway.

What will Whidbey Scenic Isle Way’s story and logo be? These elements should set the byway apart from all other byways in the country. Ideas for stories include:

- The only island byway,
- Majestic mountain vistas over welcoming tranquil waterways,

The byway logo should be graphically enticing and include those special elements of Whidbey Island. The logo could include graphics of one or more of the following:

- Water
- Wildlife



10. Marketing and Promoting the Byway



- Historical structures
- Prairie scenes
- Farm scene
- Mountain peaks
- Festivals and events (Kite Festival)

The byway committee should work with local artists to create the byway logo. A project could include a “byway logo” competition throughout the island. Logo designs could be published in newspapers or displayed at a public gallery. Local residents could vote on their favorite logo and a “byway logo unveiling” event could take place at a location along the byway.





Action Plan



How the Action Plan is Organized

The Action Plan of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way contains the following subsections:

- Anticipated Benefits of the Action Plan
- Summary of Important Issues and Considerations

- Recommended Action Items/Action Plan Summary Table
- Implementing and Updating the Action Plan

Anticipated Benefits of the Action Plan

The recommended action items for the byway will result in many benefits. The types of benefits that would result from

implementation of the Action Plan are organized into four categories:

- Preserving and Enhancing the Byway
- Balancing the Needs of Users and Improving Byway Safety
- Enhancing the Visitor Experience
- Promoting and Marketing the Corridor

Each of these categories of benefits is described below.



Photo by Helen Chatfield Weeks

Preserving and Enhancing the Byway

Identifying methods to retain and sustain the byway is a primary purpose of byway management planning. Recommended actions that fit into this category include elements such as beautification plans and planting, promoting transit and “non-driving” experiences, signage plans, scenic easement master plans, traffic calming and gateway improvements along the roadway.

Balancing the Needs of Users and Improving Byway Safety

The benefits that result from projects and strategies that improve byway safety and operations are two-fold. Existing roadway deficiencies can be improved to better handle current traffic and operational needs, and improvements will also help to prepare the transportation system for potential increased visitation and traffic. For example efforts to encourage tours by transit and use of bicycling facilities could help to reduce tourist travel by cars and RVs. Multi-modal transportation also plays an important role in balancing the needs of the users. Examples of these types of improvements include traffic calming measures, safety campaigns, pedestrian

and bicycle improvements and enhancements, transit improvements, and scenic character design enhancements.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

The byway provides many wonderful experiences for visitors, as well as for people who live and work in the area. This Action Plan focuses on enhancing these existing unique experiences, as well as creating new experiences. The recommendations to create a comfort station on the byway and expand some existing parking lots and provide additional interpretive signage will enhance visitor experience and provide educational and interpretive opportunities for visitors and residents.

Promoting and Marketing the Byway

Strategies and projects that provide benefits related to promoting and marketing the byway are valuable because of the positive economic impact increased tourism could have on the region. Marketing recommendations include promotional brochures about Whidbey Island and creating a media kit for the byway organization.

Along with marketing and promotional opportunities, there is a responsibility to

educate visitors about the important resources and intrinsic qualities of the byway. Promotional and marketing campaigns can also help to reinforce important messages to byway travelers, such as the importance of environmental stewardship, opportunities to visit the island by ferry and transit, and other important information. Encouraging stewardship and conservation of these resources and qualities should be an integral component of all promotional programs related to the byway.

Summary of Important Issues and Considerations

Several important issues and considerations influenced the development of the Action Plan. A summary of these issues and considerations is presented below.

A clear understanding of these issues and considerations, as well as a thorough knowledge of the existing conditions and intrinsic qualities of the byway, and a responsiveness to the vision statement and goals, helped to shape the strategies and projects recommended by this Action Plan.

- Intrinsic qualities are abundant. The byway contains qualities within all six of the categories: natural, archaeological, historic, cultural, recreational, and scenic.
- The byway is already promoted as a tourism and recreational destination. The abundance of intrinsic qualities and recognition as a state scenic byway provides tremendous opportunities for island residents and tourists.
- Improvements made to the byway must minimize impacts to the intrinsic qualities of the corridor and island lifestyles.
- Improvements made to the byway must minimize impacts to existing property owners, businesses, and land uses.
- Enhancements and improvements to the byway and related increases in tourism and recreation will bring positive economic benefits to the surrounding communities.
- There is a need for a public restroom facility and additional roadside pulloffs/interpretation along the byway. These should be strategically located and well planned.
- Better enforcement of current regulations (speeding, etc.) along the byway is needed.
- Byway segments in urban/town center areas, such as Clinton and Oak Harbor and other areas with high concentrations of pedestrians, bicyclists, such as state parks,

“...publicize your efforts with an eye toward continuously expanding your base of support. Celebrate the progress as well as the completion of the action. Success breeds support and future success.”

*Riverwork Book
National Park Service*



trailheads, etc. should be carefully designed to respond to these settings.

- Byway segments that traverse through sensitive natural, historic, and cultural resource areas also should be designed carefully to preserve and enhance these characteristics.

Recommended Action Items / Action Plan Summary Table

Action items include strategies, programs, enhancements, and improvements that when implemented, will help accomplish the vision and goals for the byway.

Byway-wide action items are listed first and categorized by the timeframe goal. Many of the recommendations relate to ongoing byway planning and management will involve the future byway organization. Location-specific action items are listed second and are categorized by location from north to south along the byway. For each action item, information is provided under the following subheadings:

- Action Item and Description
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Time Frame Goal

Potential funding opportunities for these action items are summarized in the list of potential funding sources in the appendix of the CMP, with more detailed descriptions related to eligibility and application guidelines.

Time frame goals for implementation of each action item are identified according to the following categories:

- O =

Ongoing: The action/strategy would occur continuously throughout the duration of the corridor planning and management process

- I =

Immediate and Near Term: Initiate action within 1 to 3 years

- M =

Mid Term: Initiate action within 3 to 6 years

- F =

Far Term: Initiate action within 6 to 10 years

It is important to note that these time frame references are goals. Actual timing of implementation will depend on many factors, including the availability of funding, the ability to obtain approvals and permits, the level of detail needed for design, and other influences. Action items identified as “Immediate” are

those projects and strategies that can be achieved in a short timeframe and allow the byway organization to continue the momentum and enthusiasm of on-going project implementation.

In the future, once some of the immediate action items are accomplished, the list may be re-prioritized and other action items may become higher in priority. Also, with ongoing planning and community involvement, additional action items will likely be added to the list in the future.

Action Plan Summary Table

The follow table includes provides the list of action items for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way byway.

Implementing and Updating the Action Plan

Identifying Potential Projects and Strategies Is Only the First Step

This Action Plan is intended to be a guide for future byway planning, management and implementation efforts. The recommended actions are based on community input and a conceptual level of review of existing conditions. They are suggestions, not mandates or requirements.

If pursued, each action item will need further consideration and analysis as part of the implementation process. Further coordination with applicable regulatory agencies and other stakeholders, as well as ongoing public participation will be necessary. Project implementation will be contingent on available funding sources and other factors. Projects potentially considered for funding through capital investment programs will be need to be further prioritized as part of city, county, or state capital improvements programming.

Individual project sites will need to be analyzed in more detail as part of future design efforts to identify land use approval requirements, determine potential sensitive areas and required mitigation, and identify environmental and land use permitting requirements. Geotechnical analysis, biological assessments, wetland delineations, wildlife habitat analysis, and other types of studies may be required as part of project implementation.

Projects will need to be designed and implemented in accordance with all local, state, and federal standards and guidelines, including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the Washington State





Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Design Manual and other state regulations, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), applicable standards and

code requirements of Island County, local jurisdictions, and other relevant development requirements. In the case where conflicts occur between these standards and guidelines, or between these and the values and purposes of this corridor management plan, further analysis and coordination with the governing agency should occur.

Updating the Action Plan

It is recognized that the priorities of the community may change over time, and the Action Plan should be reviewed periodically, updated and amended as necessary, adding new strategies and projects, and removing those that have become reality. It may also be necessary to reassign timeframe goals to the recommended strategies.

Action Items - Byway Management

Action Item	Description of Actions to be Accomplished and Steps to Implementation	Roles and Responsibilities	Time Frame Goal
<i>Byway Management and Administration Actions:</i>			
Obtain funding for ongoing byway support services	Prepare a scope of work and obtain funding to retain administrative support for the byway (coordinating meetings, newsletters, website development, etc.). Annual estimated funding need: \$25,000.	Existing steering committee, Island County	I & O
Expand existing corridor organization	Existing steering committee to recruit more local citizens, organizations, businesses, and others to be involved in the byway organization and creates a non-profit with monetary assistance for one year.	Existing steering committee, Island County	I & O
Partner with local agencies	Establish alliances with local community and economic development organizations on an ongoing basis to help support byway activities.	Byway organization	I & O
Obtain 501c3 organization status	Obtain 501c3 (non-profit) organization certification/status and set up organizational structure for expanded byway organization; conduct ongoing meetings, etc. (See Section 12 of the Corridor Management Plan - CMP.)	Existing steering committee	I
Confirm scenic byway "brand identity" and develop scenic byway logo	The byway organization should meet to confirm appropriate themes and graphic imagery for the byway's "brand identity" and then could hold an island-wide competition for the creation of a scenic byway logo.	Existing steering committee/expanded byway organization	I
Reach final decision on pursuing national scenic byway designation	Through ongoing meetings with the byway organization, as well as public involvement and outreach, determine whether or not the byway will pursue national scenic byway designation.	Byway organization, RTPO	I
Implement ongoing community participation program	Coordinate with and inform community representatives, special interests, and citizens on a regular basis. Stakeholders need to be kept informed throughout the process. (See Section 12 of the CMP.)	Byway organization	I

11. Action Plan

Action Items - Byway Wide

Action Item	Description of Actions to be Accomplished and Steps to Implementation	Roles and Responsibilities	Time Frame Goal
<i>Byway-wide Programs, Initiatives, and Projects:</i>			
Organize and conduct a "Kick-off" event – Spring 2005 Byway Birthday	Plan a kick-off event celebrating the successful plan and getting people involved early in the process of implementing the CMP. This event could include roadside clean up activities, revegetation projects, and/or a “Byway Birthday” celebration. Try to minimize costs through volunteer donations and assistance from current CMP consultant contract.	Existing Byway Steering Committee/Byway organization, Consultants, Adopt-a-Road participants	I
Create byway website	Create the byway website that includes byway logo and up-to-date programs and projects. Approximate cost: \$30,000 to \$75,000.	Byway organization	I
Promote the “non-driving experience” through a brochure and website postings	Promote and advertise Whidbey Island as a “car-free” experience. Create a brochure about transit options, advertise alternative transportation on tourism websites. A public relations or marketing consultant could be retained to assist. Approximate cost: \$50,000 to \$150,000 depending on print quantity	Byway organization, Island Transit, Chamber of Commerce, Island County Tourism	I
Touring routes brochure	Create a touring route brochure with a map that includes the touring routes (by car, bicycle, transit, etc.) listed in the CMP. Approximate cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000 depending on print quantity.	Byway organization, chamber of commerce, Island County tourism	I
“Walks of Whidbey” Map/Brochure	Create an island-wide map showing the “Top 20 Walks on Whidbey Island.” Approximate cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000 depending on print quantity.	Byway organization, Whidbey In Motion, Chambers, Whidbey Island Trails Council, Island County Tourism	I
Study needed transit facility improvements and develop a master plan	Complete a study and create a master plan to identify improvements needed for transit facilities (park and rides, bus stops, transit center, etc.) including the addition of furnishings, beautification/planting plans, etc. Approximate cost: \$80,000 to \$100,000	Island Transit	I
Safety campaign – speed limit enforcement	Byway organization should work with police departments, schools, and safety organizations, etc. to organize a safety campaign and the importance of obeying the speed limit. Approximate cost: \$30,000 to \$50,000 for printed materials.	Byway organization (coordinate with Island County sheriff), Washington State Patrol, local jurisdictions, schools	I & O

Maintain scenic roadway character through roadway design	The byway organization should continue to work closely with WSDOT on the evaluation of alternatives for lane widening, turning lanes and intersection improvements, side slope design, curvature, and other elements with the intent to preserve the visual and scenic character of the roadway.	Byway organization, WSDOT, Island County	O
Planting/revegetation projects (native plants) along the roadway; master plan and implementation	Plant native species along the corridor and continue to coordinate with WSDOT on revegetation efforts. This is an ongoing action that is a high priority for the byway organization. The first step will be to create a master plan for locations that need revegetation; the second will be to implement revegetation projects on a location by location basis. Approximate cost: master plan could be completed as a project of the byway organization through volunteer resources; implementation could also occur through volunteer resources and donated labor/materials	WSDOT and local community organizations	O
Expand multi-use trail system and improve/enhance access to trails	Extend existing multi-use trails and create new trails through Island County. Develop trailhead improvements and access opportunities (via transit) from the byway. This would be an ongoing action throughout the county; costs of implementation are analyzed by the county.	Island County – see Transportation Comprehensive Plan for locations of trails - with the support of the Byway organization and other area agencies and organizations	O
Media/speaker’s kit	Create a media /speaker's kit that includes byway logo, information, press release, website information, presentation, etc. and develop an ongoing relationship with media representatives to build awareness about byway activities	Byway organization	O
Enhance safety at pedestrian crossings	Identify locations and make pedestrian improvements along the corridor, specifically in Clinton and Freeland. Approximate costs: depends on level of improvements, but minimal striping and signing likely could be accomplished for \$20,000 to \$50,000 per location	Byway organization, schools, town representatives, WSDOT	O
Reduce and eventually eliminate the use of herbicides and pesticides along the byway.	Through native plantings and pest management, eliminate chemical dependence along the byway.	Byway organization, WSDOT, Whidbey Island No Spray Coalition	O
Develop highway beautification plan for SR 20 and 525	Identify locations for beautification projects and work with private property owners including businesses and industries. Approximate cost: \$30,000 to \$50,000 for developing the plan; costs per site will depends on the level of improvement needed.	Byway organization, WSDOT, private businesses, Master gardeners	M
Sign inventory	Complete a thorough sign analysis, inventorying all signs along the byway and making recommendations for removal, consolidation, and additional sign needs. This could be done through volunteer resources; or perhaps agency staff resources. Consultants could also be retained. Approximate cost: \$25,000.	Byway organization, WSDOT, Island County	M

11. Action Plan

Action Items - Byway Wide cont.

Action Item	Description of Actions to be Accomplished and Steps to Implementation	Roles and Responsibilities	Time Frame Goal
Interpretive guide and map	This promotional brochure would highlight the intrinsic qualities, public services, interpretive stories, etc., providing a byway-wide perspective of things to do and see for residents and visitors. Approximate cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000 or more depending on print quantity.	Chambers, Island County tourism organizations, Byway organization	M
Scenic easement master plan	Collect data and inventory site-specific information for the opportunity to purchase scenic easements along the corridor. Approximate cost: \$50,000 to \$75,000 for the study and master plan.	Byway organization, Whidbey-Camano Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve	M
Informational brochures	Educational and informational brochures about aspects of Whidbey Island including history, geology, marine life, vegetation, and cultural events. Brochures could include maps and specific touring and transit opportunities to locate the aspect – historical structures, geological features, cultural events, etc. Approximate cost: these could be smaller focused brochures and educational pieces each produced for about \$30,000 to \$50,000 depending on desired print quantity.	Byway organization, Historical Society, Beach Watchers, Island Transit, non-profit organizations	M

Action Items - Location Specific (from North to South)

Action Item	Description of Actions to be Accomplished and Steps to Implementation	Roles and Responsibilities	Time Frame Goal
Dugualla Bay Improvements	Provide a wildlife viewing platform with interpretive panels.	Byway organization, Island County, Audubon Society, Private property owners	I - Seek Funding M - Implement Project
Oak harbor - Traffic calming and wayfinding study in Oak Harbor and subsequent improvements	An analysis of traffic patterns and feasibility of traffic calming measures and improvements including wayfinding/signing improvements to strengthen connections to downtown/waterfront, planting medians, traffic circles, reducing lane widths, etc.	City of Oak Harbor, WSDOT, RTPO, FHWA, Byway organization	I - Seek Funding/Study M to F -Implement recommendations
Hastie Lake Improvements	Provide a wildlife viewing platform with interpretive panels and a small pull-out to accommodate 5-6 cars.	Island County, Audubon Society, Private property owners, Byway organization	M
Crockett Lake Improvements	Provide a wildlife viewing platform with interpretive panels.	Washington State Parks, Ebey’s Landing, Audubon, Byway organization	M
Comfort Station/Improvements at Lake Hancock Pull-out	Access feasibility of developing a comfort station at Lake Hancock with interpretive, picnic, and other facilities.	Byway organization, WSDOT, Navy, Island County, others	I - Seek Funding M - Implement project
Traffic calming, circulation and safety study in Clinton and subsequent improvements (to SR 525)	Complete an analysis of traffic patterns, safety needs, and feasibility of traffic calming measures including planting medians, lane narrowing, signalized crosswalks, sidewalks, etc. Also consider opportunities to build identity and character as part of transportation improvements in Clinton. Such opportunities could include additional landscaping, trees, public art, wayfinding elements/signing, and other enhancements. Upon completion of study, design and construct recommended improvements. Improvements should also include evaluation of access opportunities (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, etc.) to the Port of South Whidbey's future beach park.	Island County, Clinton Forum and other Clinton representatives, FHWA, WSDOT, RTPO, Port of South Whidbey, Byway organization	I- Seek Funding/Study M - Implement Project



Next Steps: Recommendations for Ongoing Public Participation, Management and Coordination



National Designation

One of the first steps the byway organization will need to proceed with is the decision about whether or not to pursue national designation through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). According to public comments, there are many pros and cons to moving forward with national designation. One thing is clear - the Whidbey Island Byway is a unique experience - a destination unto itself that possesses all six intrinsic qualities. The byway qualifies for national designation, but

deciding to pursue it will be a difficult decision.

Pros of National Designation

- The FHWA National Scenic Byways Program and WSDOT give priority funding to nationally designated byways.
- National byways receive free marketing and promotion on the National Scenic Byway's official website (www.byways.org) and national map.
- Increased tourism would be expected with national recognition.

- Economic benefits would occur through increased tourism.
- Increased recognition, public awareness, and opportunities to enhance and preserve the byway would likely occur through national designation.
- National Scenic Byways can apply for \$25,000 annual "seed" grants for ongoing byway planning, management, and programs.
- The Whidbey Island Byway could become a national model for the promotion of transit use and

12. Next Steps

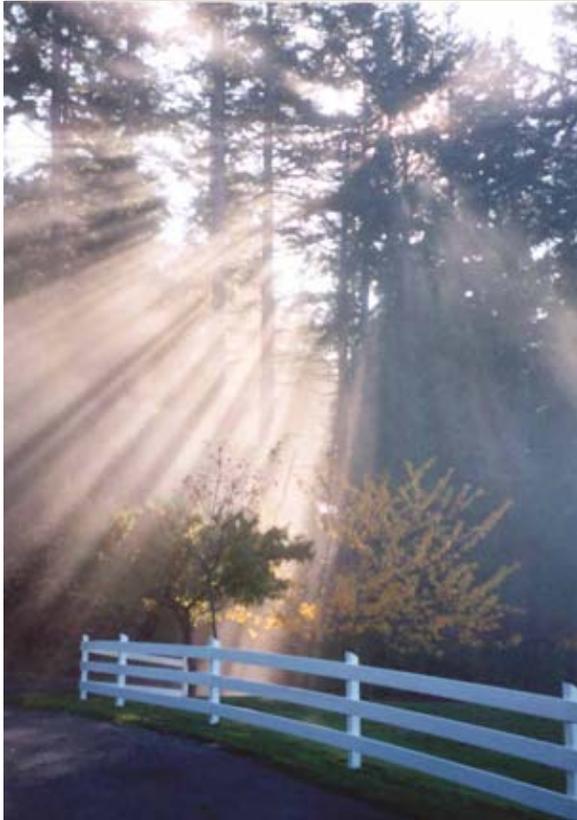


Photo by Larry Webster

alternative transportation along the entire byway.

Cons of National Designation

- While increased tourism is a pro for some, it can also be a negative for others; many are concerned that increased visitation to the island will impact the quality of life for island residents.
- The potential for increased traffic and transportation concurrency issues would need to be further evaluated.
- Increased tourism could result in overuse of and impacts to the byway's intrinsic qualities.

Increased development could occur as a result of more people visiting and wanting to build seasonal and permanent homes.

Becoming a national scenic byway will be a significant decision for the byway organization. Additionally, ongoing public involvement will be a vital part of this decision-making process.

Expanding and Strengthening the Byway Organization

On-going management and coordination efforts associated with the corridor will require strong commitment by local community representatives. In order for the goals associated with the corridor

and the recommendations in this plan to be fully achieved, a well-organized and enthusiastic group of people will need to continue to work together to coordinate and manage the ongoing planning and project implementation of activities connected with the corridor. Corridor “champions” will need to persist in bringing their energy and enthusiasm toward implementation of this plan, just as they have towards its creation.

FHWA recognized that those most “in touch” with the existing conditions and needs of a scenic byway are the local communities surrounding it. FHWA strongly encourages management of scenic byways by “grass roots” citizen-based organizations. Along with citizen-based management efforts, FHWA recommends building local support through active community involvement at every stage of the corridor planning and management process.

The Whidbey Island Byway already has an excellent start with the assistance of a group of strongly committed supporters and partners. The resources and the depth of experience of federal, state, and local agencies has helped to set the byway on a successful course. Fostering of specific byway partnerships has already occurred through the development of this plan. The ability to

successfully build on and strengthen these partnerships will be a key element in determining the future direction of the byway. Current partners and involved entities include:

- Audubon Society
- Beach Watchers
- Cascade Loop Association
- Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce
- City of Langley
- City of Oak Harbor
- Clinton Community Forum
- Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve/National Park Service
- Economic Development Council
- Friends of Freeland
- Greater Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce
- Island County
- Island County Historical Museum
- Island Transit
- Naval Air Station
- South Whidbey Chamber of Commerce
- South Whidbey Historical Society
- Town of Coupeville
- Washington State Parks
- Washington Department of Transportation
- Whidbey/Camano Land Trust

- Whidbey Institute
- Whidbey Island Conservation District
- Island County Trails Council
- Countless other individuals, businesses, and organizations who have supported the efforts to develop this Corridor Management Plan.

It is anticipated that the core group (existing byway steering committee) involved in ongoing corridor planning and management will grow and evolve over time. At the outset, it is important that the core group continue to include a diverse representation from the entire island.

The primary objective of the byway organization will be to guide the work of planning and implementing the enhancements and interpretation along the corridor. The byway organization should also sponsor special programs and events to promote the corridor. Members of the byway organization should consider the types of skills and interests most needed in the organization as it grows and evolves. Here is a suggested process for forming and expanding the core group:

- Identify skills and interests needed (i.e. newsletter writing/editing, web design, speaking, marketing, stewardship, etc.);



<http://www.oakharborchamber.org>

12. Next Steps



“Getting your scenic byway is a big challenge. Keeping it going is another”

Community Guide to Planning and Managing a Scenic Byway. FHWA.

- Identify key community people who have the skills and who have demonstrated interest in community affairs;
- Develop funding commitments to provide for supporting resources to help the byway organization.
- Talk to those interested in person and discuss the corridor, including the visions, goals, future prospects, and the importance of community involvement;
- Try and reach a broader audience for participation. Often, those interested are involved in other organizations and can only dedicate a small amount of time; and
- If the group is still too small, go directly to community organizations and solicit participation and leadership as needed.

Below is a summary of the steps involved in expanding the organization and consolidating efforts.

- Continue to include interest and organizations from entire corridor: Deception Pass to Clinton.
- Select the byway board or other leadership and set a regular monthly meeting schedule (may be more frequent for the kick-off process). It

- may be beneficial to establish structure, including election of a chair, consistent meeting agendas, meeting minutes, etc.
- Determine the appropriate subcommittees for the organization (see suggestions later in this section).
- Reach a consensus about next steps – What should the byway organization focus on first?

Confirming the Identity of the Corridor Organization

Once the core group develops and has established a regular meeting schedule, one of the first items of business will be to reach a consensus about the identity of the byway. A somewhat concise, easy-to-remember name for the byway and the organization will need to be identified.

According to public comment, most people prefer the corridor to be named The Whidbey Island Byway or the Whidbey Island Scenic Byway. This name should continue throughout future planning and project implementation, helping to reinforce the “brand identity” of the byway.

The identity of the byway should be promoted and reinforced at the local, regional, state, and national levels. Activities that will reinforce the corridor

include:

- Working with a local island artist to develop a logo for all outreach and communication materials. A local art competition could help draw local artist into the process. Residents throughout the island could vote on the best logo.
- Distributing a poster or flyer with the name and logo.
- Developing and distributing a map and brochure with the name and logo.
- Sending out a quarterly or monthly newsletter with the name and logo.
- Writing articles for the local newspapers.
- Creating letterhead that includes the name and logo on stationary used for official purposes (such as letters for grants applications or special programs.)
- Working with WSDOT and local communities to install byway logo signs and gateway signs and improvements.

Broadening Interest - Bringing in More Stakeholders

It is important to know who the stakeholders are along the byway and to involve them in corridor planning and implementation activities as much as possible. Who has not been involved to

date but should be? There may be some valuable and important partners out there ready and waiting to help. Typical major stakeholders should include:

- Property owners and private landowners and land managers along the byway (identify names from tax records) including timber and agricultural industry representatives.
- Local business people, especially those whose businesses would be affected by increased tourism.
- Agencies and interests responsible for management activities in the corridor.
- Local community associations, chambers of commerce, visitors' bureaus, and other community organizations dedicated to promoting business, quality of community life, or tourism.
- American Indian tribes who may not have been represented to date.
- Organizations dedicated to specific intrinsic qualities of the corridor (such





as historical societies, local museums, outdoor recreational organizations, local or regional festival organizers, garden clubs, and scouting groups).

These stakeholders will play an important role in the partnership. These groups can become valuable, integral partners in the byway's future. Involve them in the process by:

- Asking about their interests and concerns;
- Asking the question: What can the Whidbey Island Byway do for you?
- Responding to their questions, fears, dreams, and anxieties without judging or taking sides;
- Learning about the corridor from them;
- Listening to their ideas and integrating them into the plan;
- Clearly understanding what is desired from them and what the best role is for them;
- Looking for common ground between their concerns and the concerns of others;
- Showing them how some of their needs can be met through the enhancement of the corridor;
- Showing them ways they can be involved and how their involvement

will benefit them; and

- Inviting them to join the corridor project and work together to achieve commonly desired goals.

Potential Subcommittees/Focus Groups

The working subcommittees of the corridor organization or partnership will play important roles in the future of the corridor. These subcommittees will be the “engines” behind the overall corridor organization, making things happen on a daily basis. Subcommittees should be structured so that individuals are assigned appropriate responsibilities that match their special skills and interests. For example, someone with word processing and desktop publishing skills would be an ideal member of a “communications” or “newsletter” subcommittee. Subcommittees should meet independently from and possibly more often than the corridor leadership board and the overall corridor organization, depending on their assignments.

Here are some of the potential subcommittees that may form out of the overall “umbrella” corridor organization:

- Communications/Media Relations (responsible for newsletters, meeting invitations, flyers, press releases, etc.)

This is a very important subcommittee!

- Grant Writing/Fund Raising
- Marketing and Promotions
- Project Implementation
- Maintenance and Operations
- Government/Political Liaison
- Business and Industry Liaison (This group would meet regularly with important industry representatives - including the Navy, agricultural interests, and other important stakeholders.)
- Membership
- Community Involvement

Other subcommittees may be needed. These are some of the most common ones found in larger organizations.

The Contact List

It is important to put someone in charge of the byway contact/ mailing list. This person should be skilled with data base management so that he or she can maintain and update the list and produce mailing labels. This will be one of the most important tools to be maintained in order to keep people involved in ongoing planning and management. Creating a byway listserve or “group” e-mail is an important task as well. The e-mail list can reach a broader audience without the cost associated with mailing. As people

are identified by the core group, place them on a mailing list. At minimum, obtain their name, address/phone/e-mail, and organization or agency.

To maintain the e-mail/ mailing list, keep up with changes in the leaders of community organizations so that mailings are received by the current leaders. Remove people who move or who indicate that they are not interested. Keep all established community organizations on the e-mail/ mailing list. Getting announcements, newsletters, and meeting notices out to community organizations is an easy way to keep interested people aware of the partnership activities and progress. An organization may want to contribute to the corridor or to a special project or program they have read about by donating funds or providing in-kind services.

Building a Volunteer Support Base

To successfully build a volunteer support base for the corridor:

- Register volunteers and record their time (volunteer time is often an eligible in-kind matching source for grants);
- Identify their interests, skills, and availability;
- Thoughtfully match project needs and



12. Next Steps



volunteers;

- Make the work sessions enjoyable; and
- Build “esprit de corps” by making the work parties fun; plan food and music by local people; plan time for socializing and making friendships.

Productive projects, where one can see the physical results when one is finished, such as building trails, planting trees, landscaping, and other activities, are typically very rewarding and can help build a strong, active volunteer organization.

Ongoing Activities

There are various ongoing activities on which the expanded byway organization should focus on a continual basis:

- Coordination with agencies and jurisdictions to adopt the recommended strategies and projects from the Corridor Management Plan. Strategies and projects can be adopted into local comprehensive plans and community plans of the local jurisdictions and communities along the corridor, as well as Island County, and into the Statewide Transportation Plan, as appropriate.
- Coordination with appropriate agencies to pursue funding for projects and to manage planning, design, and

implementation of these projects.

- Continual outreach - regular communication of progress in meeting corridor goals and completing action items through newsletters, possibly a website, newspaper articles (press releases), or other means.
- Sponsorship and support of activities and projects that reinforce the goals for the corridor, such as stewardship programs, community clean-up events, and volunteer tree-plantings.
- Remember to look for fun and interesting ways to keep members of the organization enthused and active – as discussed previously. Try to avoid adding too much complexity and formality to operations – this might discourage people from getting involved and staying involved.
- The Corridor Management Plan and Action Plan should be “living documents” - updated, modified, and expanded periodically as planning efforts progress and the corridor expands.

Potential Funding Opportunities

The byway is eligible for various types of grants and government funding. One of the responsibilities of the corridor organization and leadership board will be to continue to investigate possible

funding sources and to pursue funding for byway projects and programs on an ongoing basis. Here are some ideas related to various funding sources and opportunities for which Whidbey Island Byway programs and projects may be eligible:

- Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byway Grants
- Transportation Enhancement Grants
- Public Lands Highway Grants
- Other federal grant programs
- State grant and capital funding Programs
- Regional and local governmental and nonprofit organization funding opportunities
- Public/private partnerships
- Private foundations and corporate giving programs (do some internet searching – there are lots of programs out there that contribute to the administration, programs, and projects of nonprofit organizations.)
- Private donations and development projects
- Community fund-raising – community clubs/organizations (i.e. Optimists, Elks, Rotary Clubs, etc.)
- Volunteers and in-kind resources

The Importance of Ongoing Public Participation

The Need for Broader Input

Ongoing public participation is essential to the success of future corridor planning and project implementation. The corridor organization will represent the views of local communities and interests, but at key decision-making points and important milestones in the future there also will be a need for broader community input and involvement. Citizens and special interest groups throughout the corridor can provide valuable information and input. They are the local experts – they can describe in detail the existing conditions, problems, and potential solutions that are best suited to their specific situations.

Tools for a Successful Public Involvement Program

There are several successful tools to inform and involve the public. It is recommended that the public involvement tools and corresponding schedules be used with long-term planning and management of the corridor.



12. Next Steps



Recommendations about how and when to use these public involvement tools are guidelines only. The ongoing program for the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way should be tailored to fit the preferences and needs of the byway organization and communities. Depending on events taking place within the corridor at various times, it may be necessary to adjust meeting schedules and/or press release publishing dates. If there is a period of heavy activity it may be a good idea to hold meetings more frequently or to look for other ways to engage the interest of the communities. Keep in mind that summer vacation schedules may impact meeting attendance and participation levels.

Advantages of Public Workshops and Charettes

It may be necessary to help certain community groups see the points of view of other community groups or stakeholders. One of the best methods to accomplish this is bringing all interested groups together for planning and design charettes workshops to discuss issues and work together on resolutions. In a “forum setting” people are able to better understand the concerns and perspectives of others. It is still important to understand and address the specific needs of each person or group,

and it may be necessary to hold separate meetings with special interests, but the workshop setting is best for broad community participation.

It may be necessary to hold various public meetings along the Whidbey Island Byway corridor, given that people live in different communities. Workshop announcements should be placed in local and regional newspapers, and workshops should be held at convenient and accessible locations within the community. Inviting the general public to participate through workshops will help ensure that community members and stakeholders are not left out of the process.

Reaching out the Community

People lead busy lives, and it is often difficult to attend public meetings and workshops because family and personal schedules take priority. Often, public meetings and workshops are not well attended if the issues being discussed are not controversial. Time is a precious commodity and, with that in mind, sometimes it may be necessary to reach out to the public in other ways besides meetings. Websites and e-mail lists are a good way to keep people informed and to encourage dialogue through e-mail correspondence.

A successful way to foster participation is to attend meetings that are already set-up through local chambers, tourism groups, environmental organizations, etc. This method could be successful because information can be obtained through meetings that are already attended by a group of devoted volunteers or community representatives, rather than adding another meeting to their busy schedules.

Presentations to elected officials and commissions can also provide opportunities for input and involvement in corridor activities, as well as building awareness and gathering support for needed improvements. Work sessions with senior citizens and school groups provide another opportunity for community outreach and obtaining insightful input. Byway projects could be incorporated into school projects for students or preservation projects could be a part of high school curriculum or after school activities.

There are many resources in the community including volunteers, in-kind support, gifts of materials, printing costs, etc. that can be “tapped into” as part of a strong program of community involvement and outreach.

