Historic Hills Scenic Byway
Corridor Management Plan

October 2016
The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Iowa Department of Transportation or of the Federal Highway Administration.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Pathfinders Resource Conservation & Development

Project Partners
Pathfinders Resource Conservation & Development
Iowa Department of Transportation

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American Gothic House Center
Appanoose County Engineer
Auntie Green House & Library
Bentonsport Artisan Coop
Bloom and Bark Farm
Bloomfield Main Street
Bonaparte Main Street
Bonaparte Pottery
Burns Gallery
Chariton Valley Planning & Development
Christian Herschler Winery
City of Blakesburg
City of Bloomfield
City of Donnellson
City of Drakesville
City of Eldon
City of Farmington
City of Keosauqua
City of Moravia
Davis County Conservation Board
Davis County Development Corporation
Davis County Engineer
Davis County Historical Society
Davis County Tourism
Davis County Welcome Center
French-Reneker
Honey Creek Resort State Park
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa Department of Transportation, District V
Iowa Mormon Trail Association
Keosauqua Chamber of Commerce
Lee County Conservation Board
Lee County Engineer
Mason House Inn
Moravia Historical Society
Morris Memorial Park
Pioneer Historical Society & Museum
Porch Time Bed & Breakfast
Regional Planning Affiliation 15
Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
Van Buren County Conservation Board
Van Buren County Engineer
Van Buren County Historical Society
Van Buren Preservation Society
Villages Folk School
Villages of Van Buren
Wapello County Conservation Board
Wapello County Engineer
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INTRODUCTION

What is a Scenic Byway?
The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines a scenic byway as “a public road having special scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, and/or natural qualities that have been recognized as such through legislation or some other official declaration.” Most byways have several of these qualities but nearly all share an emphasis on the scenic beauty of the surrounding landscape.

A scenic byway is more than a roadway. A scenic byway can:

- Tell the story of a special place and bring additional visitors to an area
- Protect the resources that make it special
- Bring communities together to work on a common goal
- Provide access to unique sites and features that travelers might otherwise miss

Byways Designation
Byways may be designated at the local, state or national level. Historic Hills Scenic Byway is part of Iowa’s byway program. Scenic byway designation at any level (local, state, or federal) provides recognition of the special qualities and resources of the roadway and surrounding corridor.

In Iowa, byway designation includes a unified signage system, identification on state travel maps, and technical assistance for development, management, and promotion of the byway. For many routes, byway designation stimulates increased visitation and additional opportunities for economic development. It may also mean access to funding sources not available to other roadways.

Designation does not impose new regulations on the communities or road system.

Iowa Byways
Iowa has two National Scenic Byways, one Heritage Byway and eight state scenic byways (Figure 1). The State of Iowa’s scenic/heritage byway program recognizes roadways with significant natural, scenic and historical resources. The first four Iowa byways were designated in 1993 as part of a pilot program established by the Iowa Legislature.

The Iowa Byway program is administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation, with guidance from the Iowa Scenic Byway Advisory Council. The Council is comprised of representatives from the

Figure 1. Iowa’s Byways
- Loess Hills Scenic Byway*
- Western Skies Scenic Byway
- Glacial Trails Scenic Byway
- Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway
- Iowa Valley Scenic Byway
- Great River Road Scenic Byway*
- Driftless Area Scenic Byway
- River Bluffs Scenic Byway
- Delaware Crossing Scenic Byway
- Grant Wood Scenic Byway
- Historic Hills Scenic Byway

* National Scenic Byways
Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), the Tourism Division of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Department of Natural Resources. Council responsibilities include reviewing applications and making final selections for designation based on ratings obtained from on-site evaluations.

In 2008, the Iowa DOT created the Iowa Byways Sustainability Project to enable Iowa Resource Conservation and Development Areas (RC&D) to serve as leaders for the byways. Sustainability projects have included developing and implementing fundraising strategies and protocols; assisting local agencies in preparing grants; establishing and organizing the byway board; recruiting volunteers and stakeholders; and facilitating byway events.

The byways have collaborated to fund and implement additional statewide projects including a series of articles in Our Iowa magazine, GIS Inventory and Mapping, an updated Iowa Byways Traveler’s Guide, photo library for each byway, and a byway website.

In 2012, the Byways of Iowa Coalition was created “to protect and promote the cultural, natural and scenic resources along Iowa’s Byways, fostering authentic experiences with Byway partners and communities to increase visitor-related economic development.” As a parallel effort, the Byways of Iowa Foundation was created to secure financial resources to support and sustain the mission of the Byways of Iowa Coalition.

**Historic Hills Scenic Byway Designation**

In 1993, the Iowa DOT designated the “Woodlands Scenic Byway,” an 85-mile route from Blakesburg to Donnellson (Figure 2). Establishment of the Byway was initiated by the Iowa DOT under legislative directive, but local stakeholders helped determine the route.

In 2001, Chariton Valley Planning and Development (CVPD), along with an advisory council, began work on promotion and development of the Byway. In 2002, the advisory council submitted an application to change the name to “Historic Hills Scenic Byway.” The application also included the nomination of three new segment extensions to the original 85-mile route.

**Historic Hills Scenic Byway Mission Statement**

To share with and interpret for visitors the scenic, historical, natural, cultural, and recreational resources along Historic Hills Scenic Byway, while balancing the preservation of these treasures with the economic development of the Byway Corridor.

**Vision Statement**

Historic Hills Scenic Byway attracts visitors from across Iowa and neighboring states to experience small-town charm, outdoor recreation, fascinating history, cultural diversity and natural beauty.

Our thriving communities welcome visitors to their unique shops, diverse dining and variety of overnight accommodations. Opportunities to enjoy the arts abound. History comes alive through a variety of interpretive media. Well maintained roads, excellent signage and convenient scenic pull-offs lead travelers on a safe journey through the Corridor.

Sustainable funding provides a Byway Coordinator who works with Byway stakeholders, directs marketing efforts, plans events and promotes group travel in the Corridor communities.

**Figure 2. Woodlands Scenic Byway Route**
Community sign with early version of Byway logo

In 2006, Iowa DOT approved the name change, along with the addition of 20 miles between Moravia and Drakesville. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the revamped Byway was held on June 25, 2006 in Donnellson.

Between 2002 and 2007, the advisory council and CVPD continued working in what was termed the “Historic Hills Region.” This region spanned nine counties and included the original Woodland Scenic Byway along with the proposed extensions. Marketing strategies were implemented and more than 6,000 red bud trees were planted in the region. A community sign project was initiated during that time and some towns outside the current route still boast welcome signs featuring the redbud design of the old Historic Hills logo.

Pathfinders RC&D took over coordination of Historic Hills Scenic Byway development and planning in December 2010. Work began at that time on statewide byway projects, sustainability projects and the Corridor Management Plan.

**Corridor Management Plan**

A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is a roadmap for the future promotion, preservation, and enhancement of a scenic byway. It is a locally developed and supported document that develops a vision for the Byway and a plan of action to implement that vision. The CMP is designed to help local communities provide interesting and engaging experiences to Byway travelers. Use of the strategies in the plan will help Byway towns and organizations maximize the opportunities afforded scenic Byway communities.

The CMP is not a document of new laws, regulations, or ordinances. Rather, it is a set of recommendations used to assist in protecting and promoting the Byway.

This plan provides answers to basic questions:
- What are current conditions in the Corridor?
- What is the mission of the Byway organization?
- What is the vision for the Byway?
- What steps are needed to achieve the vision?
- Who can help implement the plan?

The plan is also a tool to bring stakeholders together, creating buy-in and support for Byway initiatives. It was essential to have diverse participation in the process so the plan reflects the needs of all communities. Creating a sense of ownership is one of the most important outcomes of developing a CMP.

This Plan was developed according to the Federal Highway Administration guidelines that state a CMP should:
- Be developed with community involvement.
- Provide the vision for the byway and the surrounding area as formed collectively by communities along the byway.
- Provide an inventory of the characteristics, features, and resources associated with the byway’s intrinsic qualities.
- Document the regional or national significance of the byway’s intrinsic qualities.
- Summarize how the intrinsic qualities will be interpreted to engage the interest and imagination of visitors.
- Establish the goals, objectives and strategies for promoting the byway, enhancing and preserving the intrinsic qualities, and ensuring the continuity of the visitor’s experience.
- Provide for conservation and enhancement of the byway’s intrinsic qualities as well as promotion of tourism and other economic development.
- Outline an effective management strategy to balance these concerns while providing for users’ enjoyment of the byway.
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CMP DEVELOPMENT

Public Meetings
Input from the public was gathered at meetings held June 11, 2013 at Farmington, Bloomfield and Moravia. Twenty-seven participants attended the three meetings. Each meeting included a presentation about the Byway and current conditions. Participants were encouraged to offer opinions on ways to improve visitor experiences, how businesses and the Byway can support each other, and what makes the Byway special.

Stakeholder Group/Byway Council
Pathfinders RC&D formed a Byway stakeholder group in 2011. The group operated under the guidance of the Byway Coordinator, offering input and assistance with Byway projects including the Corridor Management Plan. Stakeholders involved in the group changed over the years but represented cities, counties, community organizations and businesses in the Corridor counties.

In 2014, the stakeholder group was organized more formally into the Historic Hills Scenic Byway Council. The Council continued to work with the Byway Coordinator to give input into the planning process. Table 1 lists 2016 Council members.

CMP Committees
Stakeholders across the Byway served on topic-based CMP committees to assist with assessment of current conditions and strategies for improvements (Table 2). Each member had an association with Byway resources or expertise on the topic. The committees reviewed materials via email and meetings.

Table 1. Historic Hills Scenic Byway Council Membership, April 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irene Brooks</td>
<td>Appanoose</td>
<td>City of Moravia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy Uhlenhake</td>
<td>Appanoose</td>
<td>Moravia Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Todd Bordenaro</td>
<td>Appanoose</td>
<td>Honey Creek Resort</td>
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<td>Eileen Taylor</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Welcome Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sher Bowersox</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Welcome Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Combs</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Reames</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Schroeder</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brad Klodt</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon Wilkinson</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis County Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyn Davidson</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Bloomfield Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Steele-Blair</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Van Buren county business owner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christie Daughtery</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Auntie Green House &amp; Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dana Mabe</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>City of Bonaparte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marilyn Thomas</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Bonaparte Pottery</td>
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<td>Lee Burningham</td>
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<td>Bonaparte Pottery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorothy Gilbert</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Morris Memorial Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Montalvo</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Pioneer Historical Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Muntz</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Collins</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Farmington business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Reese</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>Villages of Van Buren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holly Berg</td>
<td>Wapello</td>
<td>American Gothic House Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Siegel</td>
<td>Wapello</td>
<td>Wapello County Board of Supervisors</td>
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Table 2. Corridor Management Plan Committee Members by Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cultural</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Martha Ellison</td>
<td>Moravia Historical Society</td>
<td>Leon Wilkerson</td>
<td>Iowa Mormon Trail Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chuck Hanson</td>
<td>Mason House Inn, Bentonport</td>
<td>Donna Thompson</td>
<td>City of Blakesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Miller</td>
<td>Keosauqua Public Library</td>
<td>Jeanie Dixon</td>
<td>Bloomfield Art Gallery</td>
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<td>Judy Combs</td>
<td>Davis County Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Jarvis</td>
<td>Christian Herschler Winery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon Finney</td>
<td>Van Buren Preservation Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brad Kloodt</td>
<td>Iowa Mormon Trail Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Montalvo</td>
<td>Pioneer Historical Society &amp; Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interpretation/Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diana Upton-Hill</td>
<td>Bloomfield Main Street</td>
<td>Stacey Reese</td>
<td>Villages of Van Buren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stacey Reese</td>
<td>Villages of Van Buren</td>
<td>Tom Buckley</td>
<td>Lee CCB</td>
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<td>Todd Bordenaro</td>
<td>Honey Creek Resort State Park</td>
<td>Holly Berg</td>
<td>American Gothic House Center</td>
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<td>John Schroeder</td>
<td>Davis County Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Archeological</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Moore</td>
<td>Wapello County Engineer</td>
<td>Marilyn Thomas</td>
<td>Bonaparte Pottery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Huddle</td>
<td>IDOT, District V</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Rice</td>
<td>French-Reneker (representing several cities)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Kukla</td>
<td>Regional Planning Affiliation 15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Grove</td>
<td>Davis County Engineer</td>
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<td>Ernest Steffensmeier</td>
<td>Lee County Engineer</td>
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<td>Gary Bishop</td>
<td>Appanoose County Engineer</td>
<td>Holly Berg</td>
<td>American Gothic House Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nichole Moore</td>
<td>Chariton Valley Planning &amp; Development</td>
<td>Patty Rowland</td>
<td>Blakesburg volunteer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Pribyl</td>
<td>Chariton Valley Planning &amp; Development</td>
<td>Cheryl Duke</td>
<td>Bentonport/ Van Buren CCB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zach James</td>
<td>Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission</td>
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**CMP Public Meeting in Bloomfield**