

Historic Hills Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

October 2016

HISTORIC HILLS SCENIC BYWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Pathfinders Resource Conservation & Development

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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 Travelers 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.

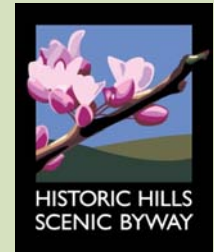
Historic Hills Scenic Byway Designation

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 determined 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

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

Table 2. Corridor Management Plan Committee Members by Topic

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Historical		Cultural	
Martha Ellison	Moravia Historical Society	Leon Wilkerson	Iowa Mormon Trail Association
Chuck Hanson	Mason House Inn, Bentonsport	Donna Thompson	City of Blakesburg
Mike Miller	Keosauqua Public Library	Jeanie Dixon	Bloomfield Art Gallery
Judy Combs	Davis County Tourism	Interpretation/Education	
Mike Jarvis	Christian Herschler Winery	Stacey Reese	Villages of Van Buren
Jon Finney	Van Buren Preservation Society	Tom Buckley	Lee CCB
Brad Klodt	Iowa Mormon Trail Association	Holly Berg	American Gothic House Center
Louise Montalvo	Pioneer Historical Society & Museum	Archeological	
Marketing		Marilyn Thomas	Bonaparte Pottery
Diana Upton-Hill	Bloomfield Main Street	Recreational & Natural Resource	
Stacey Reese	Villages of Van Buren	Chad Horn	Lake Wapello State Park
Todd Bordenaro	Honey Creek Resort State Park	Ron Moore	Lake Wapello State Park
John Schroeder	Davis County Development Corporation	Jim Settles	Van Buren County Conservation
Transportation		Justin Pedritti	Lacey Keosauqua
Brian Moore	Wapello County Engineer	Tom Basten	DNR Parks District supervisor
Jason Huddle	IDOT, District V	Josh Batterson	Davis County Conservation
Kent Rice	French-Reneker (representing several cities)	Services/Amenities	
Chris Kukla	Regional Planning Affiliation 15	Holly Berg	American Gothic House Center
Dave Grove	Davis County Engineer	Patty Rowland	Blakesburg volunteer
Ernest Steffensmeier	Lee County Engineer	Cheryl Duke	Bentonsport/ Van Buren CCB
Gary Bishop	Appanoose County Engineer		
Nichole Moore	Chariton Valley Planning & Development		
Julie Pribyl	Chariton Valley Planning & Development		
Zach James	Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission		



CMP Public Meeting in Bloomfield