


Implementation Strategies

Putting the Plan into Action

Implementation of the Corridor Management Plan is an ambitious undertaking that will involve orchestrating the actions of many individuals, organizations and public agencies. While the Alliance's current configuration proved effective in crafting the Plan and building consensus for the implementation program, a different organizational framework may be required as focus shifts to implementation.

In the Plan's first few years, the Alliance faces some important and potentially difficult decisions. Agreeing on priorities, formalizing partnerships, preparing for recognition, attracting support, pursuing funding, and managing the first round of projects are among the most pressing activities the Alliance will face.

Alliance Alternatives

Three basic alternatives exist for the Byway's management:

- The Alliance could continue operating under its current structure (or with minor adjustments).
- A new entity could be formed and charged with the Byway's management.
- The Alliance could reorganize under an existing organization.

In deciding on an appropriate management organization, consideration should be given to the factors listed below.

Level of *Autonomy*. The Alliance's role as advocate for the Plan and for individual projects and initiatives will take on greater importance as focus shifts from planning to implementation. The Alliance's level of independence will also influence its flexibility in forming strategic relationships with partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. If tied too closely to any single entity or organization, the Alliance's ability to act consistently with the Plan could be diminished.

Representation & Public Involvement. A management entity should represent the interests of a broad range of stakeholders as well as the voices of funders, potential partners and individuals in the region with the experience, insights and networks to help move the Plan forward. Successful implementation will be partly dependent upon the adoption of an entrepreneurial perspective.

Decision Making Protocols & Criteria. All activities undertaken to implement the Plan represent an important investment of limited resources. Consequently, it is imperative that very clear protocols and criteria are established and endorsed by participants and partners.

Resource Availability. Of course, the considerations regarding independence are moot if resources—funds or in-kind contributions of staff and technical assistance—are not available. Where the

money comes from and how much comes will strongly influence discussions regarding an appropriate organizational framework.

Defining Byway Projects & Initiatives

Well over 100 individual projects and initiatives aimed at achieving the vision for the Byway were identified by the Alliance during the planning process. This long list of projects and initiatives was compiled from the following:

- Needs and opportunities identified by the Byway consultants.
- Ideas generated during Byway-related workshops, briefings, and presentations.
- Ideas from town officials in response to correspondence from the Alliance.

The initial list of projects and initiatives was analyzed, refined, and ultimately organized into 33 specific proposals. Several factors informed this exercise, including direction provided by the Management Team and Advisory Committee, consideration of the Plan vision and goals, an understanding of on-going work of potential partners, and the general guidance provided under the Federal grant program.

The 33 proposals, including several calling for additional plans, pilot projects and multi-year implementation programs, provided the

starting point for the Management Team's identification of preliminary strategies and creation of the 10-year implementation plan.

Recognizing the Alliance's limited capacity and desire for early results, it was estimated that between 6-8 of the 33 projects would be appropriate to support in the first years of the Plan. Several important activities will compete for the Alliance's attention in the Plan's first two years. The Alliance will need to build support for the Plan among key stakeholders, formalize its management framework, seek endorsements and draft grant proposals. While this work is underway, the Alliance will need to push forward on its first priority projects, produce tangible results and set a foundation for long term success.

The Alliance reviewed the "Top 33" list and identified its top priorities. Factors used to guide the Alliance's consideration of alternatives included the following:

- Potential to strengthen the identity of the entire Byway.
- Potential to improve the Byway traveler's experience.
- Potential to provide early, tangible results.
- Potential to leverage other Byway investments.

A summary of the Alliance's work program follows.

Alliance Work Program

Year 1 Projects & Initiatives

Seek Endorsements & Support for National Scenic Byway Designation

To build the base of support for the Plan beyond those most active in the process, the Alliance should arrange a series of briefings and presentations to build awareness as well as understanding of the strategies and actions recommended in the Plan.

Interpretive Framework, Graphic Identity, & First Phase Communications

To set the stage for on-going communications and interpretive improvements, the Alliance should prepare an interpretive framework for the Byway, with major themes, graphic identity, and the creation of a Byway map or guide book.

Kayak/Canoe Launch Improvement Program

In partnership with MD SHA, MD DNR, and county parks departments, the Alliance should seek funding to design and construct canoe and kayak launches at several locations along the Byway. Sites identified for improvement include Cox Creek, the Chestertown riverfront in Kingstown, the Rock Hall waterfront, Toal Park, and the Sassafras River Bridge. Improvements should include launches as well as related parking improvements, directional signs, and interpretive panels.

Nomination for Recognition as a National Scenic Byway

Though a final schedule has not been established, January 2002 is the anticipated deadline for the submission of nominations for National Scenic Byway recognition. In the Fall of 2001, the Alliance should begin preparing the nomination and seeking of endorsements.

Year 2 Projects & Initiatives

Management Entity & On-Going Engagement Strategy

Following the nomination process, the Alliance's should explore and decide upon an appropriate management structure for the Byway's long-term management.

Chesapeake Country Stories Project

Working in partnership with local historians and the Maryland Historical Trust, the Alliance should seek funding to support research and development of interpretive programs and materials.

Bicycle Touring Plan

The Alliance should seek funding to support the preparation of a plan for bicycle touring which should include recommendations regarding route designations, preparation of route maps and guides, and improvement plans for specific facilities.

Kayak/Canoe Access & Water Trail Map & Guide

In partnership with county recreation departments and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Alliance should seek funding to develop maps, guides, and signs regarding kayak/canoe access points and water trails.

Town Gateway Project

In partnership with Byway towns, the Alliance should seek funding for improvement of town gateways, including the installation of landscaping and gateway signs. The Alliance could support the preparation of general improvement guidelines, identify pilot projects, and establish a multi-year implementation strategy. Funding to design and install gateway signs and landscaping for byway communities.

Year 3 Projects & Initiatives

Byway Orientation & Exhibit Planning

Using the interpretive framework and graphic identify as foundations, the Alliance should design & fabricate interpretive signs, outdoor exhibits, and orientation kiosks to introduce residents and visitors to special sites along the route.

Interpretive/Scenic Pull-Offs

The Alliance, working with MD SHA, should seek funding for the construction of Byway pull-offs with parking, seating, guiderails, interpretive signs/panels, and sidewalks/trail connections. Pilot projects could offer view of working and natural waterfronts, historic sites, and protected agricultural lands with high scenic value.

Year 4 Projects & Initiatives

Trailblazer/Entry Sign Enhancement Plan

Plan includes the review of existing trailblazer signs and development of improvement recommendations and the design and installation of byway entry signs.

Community Design Improvement Program

The Alliance, working with Byway towns, should initiate effort to support local planning for commercial areas along the Byway. Projects addressing buffering, landscaping, lighting, signs, building design, utility under-grounding, right-of-way and site access improvements, could be related to MD SHA's Neighborhood Conservation projects or town/county capital improvements focused on improving the safety, accessibility and visual quality of places along the Byway.

Chesapeake Country Design Manual & Model Ordinance Development

To provide examples of sensitive site, building and sign designs for Byway owners, builders, and developers; and code language for consideration by counties and towns.

Year 5 & Beyond Projects & Initiatives

MD SHA Byway Design Guidelines

Development of guidelines for road and right-of-way improvements along state and nationally designated scenic byways. Also could include landscape installation and maintenance guidelines including recommendations for native/traditional landscaping, wildflower planting, etc.

Passing Lanes/Pull-Offs – Design, Construction & Signage

Design and construction of passing lanes or pull-offs with appropriate signage to permit the safe movement of farm equipment along the Byway.

Place/Resource Identification Program Development

Development of design and placement guidelines for information and directional signs.

Tourist-Oriented Destination Sign (TODS) Program Development

The Alliance, working in partnership with other byway organizations in the state, should encourage MD SHA to develop plans for a byway-scaled sign program to guide travelers to tourist-oriented destinations along state and nationally-designated byways.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Improvements

To improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, the Alliance should work with counties, Byway towns, and MD SHA to prepare plans and establish priorities for the improvement to existing and creation of new facilities. Plans should be developed for the following:

- American Discovery Trail (Cross Island Trail Segment) Improvements
- Waterfront Trail/Boardwalk Construction
- Shoulder Improvements or Parallel Facility Construction

Town Center (Byway Destination/Discovery Stops) Improvement Program

The Alliance should work with Byway communities to establish priorities for the improvement of public spaces and services at Byway Destinations & Discovery Stops.

“Living on the Land” Sensitivity Program

Communication program to include the creation of new resident handbooks, agricultural heritage brochures, “Farm Equipment on the Byway” brochures/signs, and information regarding farm tours, produce stands, and local farm products.

Scenic Easement Program Development