

Introduction

Delaware is rich in scenic, historic and cultural resources. The first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, Delaware's landscapes and communities tell stories from battles between warring colonial powers, to the rise of a mercantile economy among the mills of the Brandywine River, to the continuing importance of agriculture to the state, to the evolution of American recreational pastimes along the state's beckoning beaches.

These diverse resources and their stories are accessible to travelers and residents along road corridors that deserve special consideration of their unique features and special role in the highway system. To recognize Delaware's special road corridors, the General Assembly in 2000 created a Scenic and Historic Highway Program (17 Del.C. c. 1 §101).

This program guide provides an understanding of the vision for Delaware's Scenic and Historic Highway Program, and an overview of the designation process, including how you can nominate a roadway. It also provides information on identifying intrinsic qualities (scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational, and archeological), preparing corridor plans and seeking sources of support in implementing these plans.

A route may be nominated for Scenic & Historic Highway designation if it has one of the following intrinsic qualities:

- Scenic
- Natural
- Recreational
- Historic
- Cultural
- Archeological

What is a Scenic and Historic Highway?

A Scenic and Historic Highway is a transportation route which is adjacent to or travels through an area that has particular intrinsic scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational or archeological qualities. It is a road corridor that offers an alternative travel route to our major highways, while telling a story about Delaware's heritage, recreational activities or beauty. It is a route that is managed in order to protect its special intrinsic qualities and to encourage appreciation and/or development of tourism and recreational resources. Scenic and Historic Highways can also be called "scenic byways."

Why would you want to seek this designation for a roadway?

Scenic and Historic Highway designation provides official recognition of the special nature of a roadway corridor. This designation will heighten awareness and recognition of the community seeking the designation and help to boost community pride.

Additional community benefits may include:

- Increased business, tax revenue, and jobs from tourist dollars.
- Federal and state funding for planning and implementing a corridor plan.
- Protection for a resource that may become threatened.
- Improved maintenance for your road.
- Access to resources and expert assistance in managing the corridor.
- Identification on state highway maps, leading to more tourism opportunities for the area.
- Assistance from state offices of economic development and tourism.

Relationship to personal property rights

When a roadway is designated as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway, a Corridor Plan must be developed, which includes a process for involving property owners in a collaborative discussion of future plans for the highway corridor. The preparation of the Corridor Plan provides a means to consider the interests of all affected parties. Designating a roadway corridor as Scenic and Historic does not mean property owners will be told what to do with their property.

Program governance

Delaware's Scenic and Historic Highways Program is a collaborative effort of Delaware's citizens, local, state and federal government. During the 2000 legislative session, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 320 authorizing the Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) to develop the Delaware Scenic and Historic Highways Program. Senate Bill 320 required that the program be developed under the guidance of the State Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board and it required that the Board be comprised of a wide range of interests. Members of the Board include representatives of county government, other state agencies, the outdoor advertising industry, the real estate industry and various environmental and historic preservation advocacy groups.

The State Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board assists and recommends in the designation, development, operation, management and promotion of scenic and historic highways. The program is managed by DeIDOT. The Secretary of Transportation designates Delaware Scenic and Historic Highways based upon criteria outlined in this program guide and

upon the recommendations of the State Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board.

DelDOT is responsible for an annual evaluation of the Scenic and Historic Highways Program that identifies changes needed to keep the Program current with the state of the practice. The annual evaluation also tracks the progress of sponsors of designated Scenic and Historic Highways in implementing corridor plans to support, preserve and manage the special qualities of their corridor. DelDOT provides an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on the overall status of the Program and the individual highways designated under it.

National Scenic Byways Program

Delaware's Scenic and Historic Highways Program has been spurred by the creation and policies of the National Scenic Byways Program, first established in 1991 by the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). This program, managed by the U.S. Department of Transportation in partnership with state departments of transportation or other responsible state agencies, designates National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads based on their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, natural and/or archeological intrinsic qualities.

Through 2000, 66 National Scenic Byways and 15 All-American Roads have been designated. Federal funds may be available to assist sponsors of state scenic byways. These funds may be used to prepare corridor management plans, to seek National Scenic Byway designation, or for other purposes including executing interpretive plans, preparing marketing materials, or addressing safety improvements needed due to scenic byway designation.

Program vision, goals and objectives

Looking into the future, the State Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board discussed their vision for the Program, its accomplishments and contributions to the citizens of Delaware. They outlined the Vision, Goals and Objectives for the program as follows:

The Delaware State Scenic and Historic Highways Program showcases the natural beauty and unique features of the state and fosters the preservation of natural, cultural and historic resources, while benefiting economic development through tourism and recreational opportunities.

Sites and features of the State Scenic and Historic Highways are apparent to all who travel Delaware roads, and the Program enjoys broad public participation and support.

Vision

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Goal 1

Evaluate and Designate State Scenic and Historic Highways.

- Determine the responsibilities of sponsors seeking to designate a corridor under the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program.
- Determine the responsibilities of the State Department of Transportation in administering the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program.
- Determine the responsibilities of the Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board in administering the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program.
- Define the opportunities, benefits, and impacts of designation under the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program.
- Assure compliance with FHWA requirements regarding outdoor advertising control.
- Ensure that all scenic and historic highway designations are continuous.
- Evaluate opportunities for multi-state scenic byway development.

Goal 2

Protect and/or enhance State Scenic and Historic Highways and their resources through a coordinated management program while ensuring the safe operation of these routes.

- Coordinate with other related federal, state, local and private sector programs and planning processes.
- Determine the responsibility of local government in the management of designated State Scenic and Historic Highways.
- Assist State Scenic and Historic Highway sponsors in locating and applying for federal, state and private funding available to support such highways.
- Ensure adherence to Federal Scenic Byways Program requirements to afford the best opportunity for federal funding and designation where desired.
- Protect the historic and scenic character of the highway while addressing the need for safe and efficient traffic flow.
- Promote the use of Context Sensitive Design criteria and traffic calming measures.
- Encourage multi-modal systems wherever feasible - auto, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle.
- Address the needs of commerce in corridor management plans.

- Support full range of public and private landscape conservation and historic preservation programs to afford resource protection to the intrinsic qualities of designated scenic highways.
- Advocate for legislation to enhance funding opportunities for the intrinsic resources of designated scenic highways.

Goal 3

Benefit economic development through tourism and promote byway related educational and recreational opportunities.

- Promote tourism opportunities associated with State Scenic and Historic Highways.
- Develop marketing programs to highlight State Scenic and Historic Highways.
- Improve access to areas utilized for the purposes of recreation where appropriate while protecting the intrinsic qualities of the designated scenic highway and the recreation area.
- Develop a unique identity for the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program.
- Develop a creative range of interpretive materials on the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program and the corridors designated within it such as maps, brochures, a website, and wayside exhibits, among other ideas.
- Coordinate with the Delaware Historic Markers Program and other educational programs with related purposes to the Scenic and Historic Highways Program.

Goal 4

Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the State Scenic and Historic Highways Program to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the State and its citizens.

Develop an annual evaluation program that will:

- a) identify changes needed to keep the Program current with the state of the practice;
- b) track the progress of individual corridor management plans as well as conformance with the provisions of the Program; and
- c) provide an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on the overall status of the Program and the individual highways designated under it.