

Chapter 2

Step 1 – Nomination Application

Who can nominate a route to become a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway?

Any interested party can nominate a route, including individuals; local governments; counties; tourism departments; historical societies; non-profit organizations; state and federal agencies; or a Corridor Advocacy Group formed of citizens, groups or local governments. The party nominating a route is called the sponsor.

What information is required for the nomination?

DeIDOT has prepared a nomination form to guide the sponsor in preparing the Step 1 – Nomination Application. The sponsor needs to provide the following information about the proposed Scenic and Historic Highway:

- A physical description of the route,
- Representative photographs,
- A map indicating the boundaries of the route that locates the intrinsic qualities along the corridor, and indicates land uses in the corridor,
- An intrinsic quality resource inventory,
- A written statement that summarizes and evaluates the significance of the primary intrinsic quality for which the highway merits designation and that also describes the significance of any secondary intrinsic qualities present along the route.
- A written description of what a traveler will see when traversing the corridor.
- A description of public involvement conducted to date and the comments and input that have resulted from this process.

Who reviews the nomination and what is the review process?

DeIDOT's Scenic and Historic Highways Coordinator reviews the nomination application with representatives from the State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Delaware Tourism Office, and Department of Agriculture. This Evaluation Committee jointly makes a recommendation to DeIDOT's Director of Planning. If the Evaluation Committee's recommendation is that the Nomination is not complete or should not be approved, DeIDOT's Director of Planning will return the nomination application to the sponsor with a letter that specifies reasons for the disapproval and includes recommendations for how the application could be resubmitted, if appropriate.

If the Evaluation Committee's joint recommendation to the Director of Planning is favorable, the Director of Planning reviews the application and submits it with the Evaluation Committee's recommendation and with his or her recommendation to the State Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board for review. If the Advisory Board recommends approval, the application is submitted to the Secretary of Transportation for review and a final decision.

What is the timeline for review of Step 1 – Nomination Applications?

There will be ongoing reviews of Step 1 – Nomination Applications by the Evaluation Committee and by the Advisory Board. As a guideline, DeIDOT will issue a response to the applicant within 120 days from the time that a complete Step 1 – Nomination Application is received.

Who designates a roadway as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway?

Designation is made by Delaware's Secretary of Transportation based on submission of the Step 1 – Nomination Application, joint review by the Evaluation Committee of state agency representatives, review by DeIDOT's Director of Planning and then review and recommendation for approval by the State Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board.

What is the effect of designation as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway?

As stated in the preceding section, two principal impacts result from the designation of a route as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway. First, the sponsor for the route is eligible to apply through the Delaware Department of Transportation to the Federal Highway Administration for grant funds to assist with the completion of a Corridor Plan for the Scenic and Historic Highway and/or may use the state designation status to assist in seeking funding from other sources to assist with the Corridor Plan.

Secondly, the designation affects permits for new outdoor advertising signs that are placed on one property but advertise goods or services available on another property. Such new off site/off premise outdoor advertising signs are not permitted along state Scenic and Historic Highways. This rule does not affect existing outdoor advertising.

Other benefits of designation as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway follow once the Corridor Plan that is described in the next chapter is approved.

What are the Designation criteria for the Step 1 – Nomination Application?

The primary criteria include consideration of the quality of the road's intrinsic scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational or archeological resources. The Sponsor should identify and provide documentation of the primary intrinsic quality for which they think the road merits designation as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway. The application should include a statement of significance for these resources to justify why the route merits designation.

While the route can qualify as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway based on the significance of just one intrinsic quality, applicants should also describe any secondary intrinsic qualities present along the route and provide a statement describing the significance of the resources.

Additional criteria include:

- A requirement that the route proposed for designation must be continuous in order to encourage management of the entire route to protect its special intrinsic qualities and to support the best possible visitor experience along the route.
- Information to demonstrate a high level of public involvement and public support.
- The route must be a public route that safely accommodates two-wheel drive motor vehicles.

Information about intrinsic qualities: definitions

Scenic Quality is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and man-made elements of the visual environment of the scenic and historic highway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape – landform, 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 Quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or man-made, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for 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. Historic features must possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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

Cultural Quality is evidence and expression 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, vernacular architecture, etc. that are currently being practiced. The cultural qualities of the corridor could highlight one or more significant communities and/or ethnic traditions.

Recreational Quality involves outdoor recreational activities directly associated with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences including, but not limited to, rafting, boating, fishing and hiking. Driving the road itself may qualify as a pleasurable recreational experience. The recreational activities may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the recreational activities as seasonal operations must be well recognized.

Archeological Quality involves those characteristics of the scenic and historic highway corridor that provide physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that is visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The corridor's archeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence, has scientific significance that educates the viewer and stirs an appreciation for the past.

How to inventory and evaluate your corridor's intrinsic qualities

In 1999, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a booklet titled, "Byway Beginnings: Understanding, Inventorying, and Evaluating a Byway's Intrinsic Qualities." This publication is available on request from the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse by calling 1-800-4byways and selecting extension #2. This publication provides information about inventorying and evaluating byways' intrinsic qualities. Although the booklet was prepared to assist byway sponsors seeking National Scenic Byway designation, nearly all of the information presented is applicable to sponsors seeking Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway designation.

One important difference between the FHWA publication's guidance and the criteria for Delaware's Scenic and Historic Highway designation should be noted. In discussing "Evaluating the Byway's Significance," on page 55 of the publication, the text references a need to demonstrate "regional" significance, defined as exhibiting at least one intrinsic quality that is representative of a geographic area encompassing two or more states. Delaware's designation criteria do not require that the intrinsic quality be found to have regional significance. Demonstrating significance in a statewide context is sufficient.

DelDOT's Scenic and Historic Highways Coordinator is available to attend meetings and provide

phone consultation to prospective Scenic and Historic Highway sponsors regarding the guidance provided in the FHWA publication and the evaluation of intrinsic qualities for purposes of designation as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway.