



MARKETING AND SCENIC CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS



Concepts and Directions

PREPARED FOR

NORTHWEST PASSAGE SCENIC BYWAY ADVISORY TEAM

ON BEHALF OF

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide a conceptual framework for recommendations to five communities in North Central Idaho that are served by and rely upon U.S. Highways 12 and 13, known as the Northwest Passage Scenic Byway (NWPSB). With the National Scenic Byway and All-American Road designations, these five communities – Lewiston, Orofino, Kamiah, Kooskia and Grangeville – seek ways to maintain the scenic quality of the region while simultaneously enhancing economic opportunities and attracting visitors.

BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The foundation of our recommendations is rooted in principles and practice of land use planning and context sensitive transportation planning with particular emphasis on small town design, form and function. Our observations are based on the following elements:

- ✓ Analysis of the existing plans and regulatory documents related to land development;
- ✓ Brief site visits to individual communities and the region;
- ✓ Informal surveys of area residents;
- ✓ Workshops held in each of five communities;
- ✓ Comments and input from community leaders; and
- ✓ Our team’s knowledge of best practices in other jurisdictions.

Included with each community’s recommendations is a map identifying the location of recommended projects.

GENERAL THEMES

Some general themes that emerged from discussions during the workshops were:

- ➞ Defining “Scenic”
- ➞ Encouraging Housing Variety
- ➞ Reserving Places for Industry
- ➞ The Highway Serves the Community
- ➞ Connecting People and Places
- ➞ Anticipating Change



Defining Scenic

In order for the communities along the byway to take steps to conserve what is considered to be the scenic quality of the place, they must first define the value of scenic. This concept will require communities to conduct a visual assessment of the landscape and the built environment in their area. Such an assessment would entail identifying and prioritizing preferences associated with a variety of features in the communities – in other words, distilling the qualities that create a sense of place for the residents. An example set of questions might be:

“Do you perceive the view to the north to have an aesthetic value?”

“On a scale of 1-10 if that view were dramatically altered with housing or industry, would your perception change?”

By conducting a visual assessment of the important assets to the community, the community will be better poised to then evaluate options for conserving those assets.

Encouraging Housing Variety

To balance the rights of individual property owners with the rights of the community as a whole is to embrace all manners of housing, but to do so in a framework built on the impacts brought about by different types of design. Establishing guidelines that direct some key elements facilitate the ability to maintain the scenic quality of the place. Some elements might include standards for construction on hillsides, including maximum grades for roads, setbacks from ridgeline and building height.

Reserving Places for Industry

Many of these communities are working to maintain economic vitality in a region that has lost some of its historic resource extractive industry. As fuel prices continue to rise, rail lines will likely continue to be an important transportation function for the region and could support many different types of commerce. Communities may want to identify appropriate places for potential manufacturing or other industries that are consistent with preserving the aesthetic values established with a visual assessment.



The Highway Serves the Community

This theme is philosophical in nature, requiring a shift in how we have traditionally related to the roads in our communities. Rather than being subservient to the road network residents of an area need to feel empowered to direct the design of the roadways that *serve* them. In this manner, where the highway is integral to the community, its treatment must be regarded in the context of that community it serves.

Connecting People and Places

The NWPSB is a shared corridor by multiple communities. The Clearwater River, as the primary natural feature, and the highway as the primary travel route interconnect the communities in many ways. As the communities change and tourism becomes a bigger part of the economy, the railroad and trails may become more prominent opportunities to support tourism – envision a tour train from Lewiston to Kooskia, establishing a depot in all the towns.

Anticipating Change

“[C]hange is the one thing that will remain constant” (Anthony J. D’Angelo). Embracing this message is the key to successfully envisioning the future. The byway communities will change, but whether that change happens by default incrementally over time, or whether it happens by action and in a fashion that represents the goals and values of the communities is a critical decision to be made. In addition, the communities will be well-served to continue to work cooperatively with each other and agencies for the overall success of the region – there is strength in numbers.

Resources:

Small Town Planning Handbook, 3rd Edition. Thomas L. Daniels, et al, 2007. Published by the American Planning Association (APA).

True West – Authentic Development Patterns for Small Towns and Rural Areas. Christopher Duerksen & James van Hemert, 2003, (APA).

Saving America’s Countryside – A Guide for Rural Conservation. Samuel N. Stokes, et al, 1997. Published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

A Pattern Language – Towns, Buildings, Construction. Christopher Alexander, et al, 1977. Published by Oxford University Press.



COMMUNITY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

LEWISTON

At over 30,000 residents and more than ten times larger than any of the other byway communities, Lewiston is in a different category of town. Having prepared a strategic plan for tourism for the Lewis-Clark Valley, Lewiston is poised to think of itself as a regional hub and home to emerging commerce. Some of our observations, in fact, overlap with existing planning and revitalization efforts for the community.

Project Number 1

Create a stronger link with downtown.

As identified in the City's vision for a revitalized downtown, Lewiston needs to create a stronger entrance to downtown from the east. From 21st Street to 1st Street, enhancing the experience of getting to downtown with a tree-lined boulevard would establish a path and invite people to explore the area, not just hurry up and drive through. This will also help to anchor the west end of the byway. With the waterport and airport, Lewiston becomes a launching point for North Central Idaho.

Project Number 2

Connect the community to the riverfront trail.

The City has a great trail along the dike that is paved, open and enhanced with natural areas. However, the railroad tracks pose a barrier to accessing the trail by bicycle or on foot – if a person wants to use the trail they have to drive to it. Working to secure more opportunities for bike and pedestrian access to the trail has multiple benefits for residents and visitors. There are numerous examples from around the country where communities have reclaimed their riverfront and made it a prominent local and regional feature.

Project Number 3

Jumpstart a redevelopment effort of the riverfront.

In order to encourage redevelopment of the industrial riverfront the City may want to make a public investment that generates interest for potential developers. This might include facilitating the demolition of buildings in order to "ready" the site.



Due to the proximity of the industrial riverfront to downtown, ensuring that its redevelopment complements and enhances downtown will be essential to the overall health and function of the downtown.



Visualization of possible redevelopment scenario at Twin Foods site. © WGM Group, 2008.

Project Number 4

Establish a visitor's center for the west entrance to the byway.

Lewiston is lacking a strong "Welcome" to the city as travelers come from the east. Establishing a visitor's center in an easily accessible location on the north side of the river will provide a dual function of welcoming people to Lewiston as well as to the NWPSB. It should be as inviting as the Visitor's Center located at Lolo Pass on the east end of the NWPSB.

Project Number 5

Strengthen downtown's presence as a gathering place.

Brand downtown Lewiston as a different experience from that of 21st Street, which can be found anywhere in America. Downtown Lewiston should be the place people think about going when they come to visit – a special and exciting place that offers something that other places do not.

Project Number 6

Review the zoning on agricultural ground.

The City may want to review the existing zoning and land use regulations to ensure that prime agricultural land is zoned for appropriate densities that conserve agricultural opportunities while maintaining appropriate development opportunities. Consider adopting design standards for locating buildings, such as setbacks from ridgelines, hillside development standards (i.e., restrictions based on degree of slope) and building height.



OROFINO

With a population of approximately 3,100 people, Orofino has a strong presence as a small town in the region with its diverse economy, historic downtown and immediate access to recreational amenities. Several opportunities present themselves in this community.

Project Number 1

Build on the downtown core.

Continue to support and strengthen downtown by promoting and encouraging housing in downtown. The compactness of the community lends itself for easy non-motorized access to some area employers. Several buildings appear to be able to support upper story apartments and condominiums. Identify vacant parcels and review the zoning to accommodate increased housing opportunities in the core.

Project Number 2

Identify areas for redevelopment.

Several parts of the community appear to have potential for redevelopment with consideration for the future of the community. Identify industrial properties that are transitioning as the economy changes and plan for redevelopment to new industry, commercial or residential use. This will require identifying what the community's needs are, i.e., workforce housing in and around the town core; areas for manufacturing, etc. This ties in somewhat with Project Number 1 and both efforts can be sought simultaneously.

Project Number 3

Create a downtown gateway.

Orofino needs a stronger entrance on the west side of the river to invite travelers to explore the community and historic downtown that exists on the east side of the river. Currently, there is a welcome sign as one approaches Riverside from the west, but it is several miles of 50 mile-an-hour driving before you reach the bridge and by then the traveler can easily miss the fact that there is more to the community than what they just sped by. Some ways to make a stronger gateway include: improved signage, aesthetic improvements such as landscaping, and an intersection at Highway 12/Michigan Avenue that is of a pedestrian scale. This project also ties in with Project Number 7.



Project Number 4

Conserve prominent features.

The knoll that is located immediately northwest of town represents a prominent feature on the landscape in proximity to town, and its usage will affect the scenic quality of the community. It is noticeable to travelers from both directions, and visually conveys itself to belong to the community. Because the knoll is private property, great care will need to be taken in discussions about its impact, and a conversation with the owner will need to be initiated. If the community identifies the site in their visual assessment study as having scenic value, some options to consider might be: a review of the zoning ordinance regulating the site (see Project Number 5); request a conservation easement from the owner – this offers a tax advantage to the owner; or enlist the assistance of an organization to purchase the easement, if unable to secure as a gift.

Project Number 5

Create design standards for hillside development.

The topography in the vicinity of town limits the available developable area. It is not a coincidence that Orofino and Riverside are situated on the level creek bottom and river edge – it is much more efficient and cost effective and less disruptive on the landscape than developing on hillsides. Consider adopting design standards for locating buildings, such as setbacks from ridgelines, hillside development standards (i.e., restrictions based on degree of slope) and building height. Such standards reduce the amount of cut and fill required on slopes, help prevent erosion, and retain the scenic quality of the place – an attribute identified by some residents as the reason for living in the area.

Project Number 6

Reduce Highway 12 to three lanes. The 5-lane section of Highway 12 through Orofino and Riverside is out of character with the scenic byway corridor and is not sensitive to the context of the community. Travelers on the 5-lane stretch of Highway 12, in the vicinity of Riverside, need to be reminded that they are traveling through a neighborhood. At the posted speeds, it would appear to be difficult for passers-by to be inclined to stop and patronize the local businesses as they are driving at speeds that prevent them from noticing much in their periphery. The wide roadway promotes higher speeds, lacks adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and is difficult to cross. Traffic volumes suggest that a 3-lane “Road Diet” should be given serious consideration.



This would remove the two outside driving lanes, allowing room for sidewalks, bike paths, boulevards, landscaping and other amenities that would improve safety and promote lower speeds. Reducing speed limits is difficult. Focus on design elements that contribute to lower speeds, such as narrower lane widths, raised medians, curb bulbouts, and landscaping.



Visualization of possible roadway improvements. © WGM Group, 2008

Implementation Steps:

- ❑ Conduct a technical evaluation of traffic operations. This could be part of the Highway 12 Corridor Study being prepared by ITD or a separate study.
- ❑ Establish goals, performance measures, and expectations through community involvement with stakeholders.
- ❑ Prepare conceptual plans and cost estimates.
- ❑ Identify funding.
- ❑ Prepare construction documents.

Cost:

Road diet costs range from \$50,000 per mile for basic re-striping to \$4 million per mile for complete reconstruction.

Resources:

Road Diet Handbook: Setting Trends for Livable Streets, Jennifer Rosales, PE, Parsons Brinkerhoff, 2006. An overview is available on our website at <http://www.wmggroup.com/nwpsb>



Project Number 7

Connect the community to the river.

The beautiful Clearwater River bisects the communities of Orofino and Riverside and the 5-lane section of Highway 12 presents a significant barrier to the Riverside community. Improving access across the highway to the riverfront and Canoe Camp will improve the scenic quality and sense of place in Riverside. Carefully designed crosswalks, raised median refuges, or underpasses would improve these connections. A riverfront trail connecting Riverside to Orofino would be a major asset for the community and visitors.



KAMIAH

Project Number 1

Consider the future of the riverfront.

Properties located along the riverfront are the first thing that travelers see when entering Kamiah. It is the community gateway, and its appearance will give travelers an idea of what to expect from the town. First, a comprehensive floodplain analysis should be completed to determine developable areas along the riverfront. Following that, encourage complementary businesses that do not detract from downtown, such as a hotel, restaurant, and medical services. This may require reviewing the zoning on the property.

Project Number 2

Create a non-motorized connection to the river.

Installing a bicycle/pedestrian path from town to the river and park has already been identified by the community as a needed enhancement. Due to drainage considerations and existing shoulder width, a simple solution that includes a striped shoulder and a 4-foot path of crushed gravel material will add the needed link and likely become heavily used both by residents and visitors.

Project Number 3

Create an identity intersection.

Encourage visitors to slow down and explore Kamiah with unique signing, architecture, and landscape treatments. This might include curb bulbouts, crosswalks, boulevard trees, planters, street lighting, and public art. Consider parallel parking along Highway 12, and angle parking on Main Street. Continue the pattern of intersection improvements south on Main Street to strengthen the unique downtown identity.

Implementation Steps:

- ❑ Establish goals and expectations with community stakeholders.
- ❑ Engage ITD through the Highway 12 Corridor Study process.
- ❑ Prepare conceptual plans and cost estimates.
- ❑ Identify funding sources.
- ❑ Prepare construction documents.



Visualization of possible intersection improvements. © WGM Group, 2008

Costs:

Typical costs for these improvements range from \$75,000 to \$125,000 per intersection.

Project Numbers 4 and 5

Identify potentially developable areas adjacent to town center.

Encouraging housing close to downtown allows for convenient access to the town's services, lowers costs of infrastructure maintenance and helps to maintain a vibrant and healthy community. There are two key areas adjacent to the town core that, as the town grows, should be the direction in which the growth occurs. The grid road system can be extended with ease, and in the location of Project Number 5, additional connection to the riverfront could be made possible. Allow for a variety of housing types as these areas develop – condominiums, town homes, and small single-family lots – to capitalize on the baby-boomer demographic.



KOOSKIA

Project Number 1

Consider the future of the riverfront.

Kooskia has established itself as the first full-service town on the NWPSB and the informational kiosk on the north side of the river is a welcome sign to travelers. However, as travelers cross the river and enter the town, properties along the riverfront are the first thing that travelers see. It is the community gateway, and its appearance will give travelers an idea of what to expect from the town. First, a comprehensive floodplain analysis should be completed to determine developable areas along the riverfront. The proximity of town to the riverfront lends itself to extending the town pattern of design so as not to detract from downtown. Complementary business should be encouraged, such as a hotel, restaurant, and other services.

Project Number 2

Strengthen the southern entrance to town.

Since Kooskia has two entrances, it is important to make strong statements with those entrances. Create an edge at the southern entrance to town that lets travelers know when they have left the scenic countryside and are entering town. Improvements might include signage and encouraging beautification of properties with highway frontage.

Project Number 3

Connect the town to the high school.

Installing a bicycle/pedestrian path from town to the high school has long been identified by the community as a much needed enhancement project and great effort went into working out a solution a decade ago. Due to various circumstances, it has had difficulty getting traction, but its completion is critical for a number of reasons, not the least of which is safety for students. Separate the trail from the highway where possible and identify future opportunities for trails along the river.



Implementation Steps:

- ❑ Identify a preferred alignment and secure easements or agreements for trail right-of-way.
- ❑ Prepare conceptual plans and cost estimates – drainage will be a major consideration and may require curb & gutter along the highway if alternate routes are not available.
- ❑ Identify funding sources
- ❑ Prepare construction documents



Visualization of possible trail/sidewalk improvements. © WGM Group, 2008



Visualization of possible trail/sidewalk improvements. © WGM Group, 2008



Costs:

Typical asphalt paved trails range from \$250,000 to \$300,000 per mile. Alternative surfacing could include concrete sidewalk (in town) or crushed gravel surfacing (along the river).

Project Number 4

Opportunities for redevelopment.

Kooskia is home to many historic buildings, several of which present opportunities for rehabilitation and reinvestment. Kooskia shares many similarities with Philipsburg, Montana, a town of about 1000 that has recreated itself over the last 12-15 years as a beautifully restored historic town on the famous Pintlar Scenic Loop. It has received awards for one of the “prettiest places in America” and was selected as the outstanding tourism community in 1998, by the State of Montana (<http://philipsburgmt.com/>). Another opportunity for future redevelopment is the mill at the south end of town. As operations change, the community should consider what types of uses may be appropriate and complementary to town, as well as providing economic opportunities.

Project Number 5

Consider the viewshed of the adjacent hillsides.

The beautiful hillsides that surround town represent a scenic quality and contribute to the town’s sense of place. What takes place on those hillsides will affect the scenic quality of the community.

Communities have developed on level ground with good reason – it is much more efficient and cost effective and less disruptive on the landscape than developing on hillsides. While there might currently be limits on the regulatory options available to Kooskia, other options, such as conservation easements, are excellent tools for preserving viewsheds. Conservation easements offer a tax advantage to the landowner. Encouraging such easements and enlisting the assistance of an organization to purchase easements, if unable to secure as a gift, are important to conserving the scenic quality of the place.



GRANGEVILLE

Grangeville is a stable small town at the southern end of the Camas Prairie in the region. Its location at the entrance to the U.S. Highway 13 portion of the NWPSB gives it a unique position relative to the other communities. Grangeville may wish to consider the elements described below as it continues the discussions about its relationship to the scenic byway.

Building on the core.

Like most small western towns, Grangeville is laid out on a grid and is fairly compact, embodying most elements of small town design. It is clear where the community core ends and the rural countryside begins. This edge provides a variety of opportunities. It provides for logical expansion of the town as it grows incrementally; and it provides the opportunity to create a greenbelt with a path for residents to enjoy with easy access.

Preserving agricultural heritage.

While Grangeville is surrounded by agricultural land, this discussion focuses on the agricultural land along the scenic byway northeast towards Harpster Grade. Though the community may not be experiencing rapid growth and development currently, with incremental changes over time, the landscape that exists today could be startlingly different a generation from now. Taking steps to conserve the cultural heritage of Grangeville associated with agriculture also serves to preserve the scenic quality of the experience that visitors have as they travel through. As indicated in the workshops, heritage tourism is a growing market. The American Farmland Trust identifies several options for farmland preservation in their Farmland Protection Toolbox:

http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27761/fp_toolbox_02-2008.pdf.



FUNDING RESOURCES

Putting energy and resources into identifying and creating funding sources to analyze the feasibility and subsequent implementation of the recommendations in this report is the first step in the process. There are numerous places to look for funding, but the following is a short list of potential resources and is broken into two general areas depending on the nature of the project.

PLANNING AND SCENIC CONSERVATION

- ORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION
- YOUR TOWN – CITIZEN’S INSTITUTE ON RURAL DESIGN:
 - [HTTP://WWW.YOURTOWNDESIGN.ORG/](http://www.yourtowndesign.org/)
- IDAHO FOUNDATION FOR PARKS & LANDS
 - [HTTP://WWW.IDAHOLANDS.ORG/INDEX.HTML](http://www.idaholands.org/index.html)
- PALOUSE LAND TRUST
 - [HTTP://WWW.PALOUSELANDTRUST.ORG](http://www.palouselandtrust.org)
- LICENSE PLATES (SEE EXAMPLE UNDER “SPONSORED PLATES” AT:
 - [HTTP://WWW.DOJ.MT.GOV/DRIVING/LICENSEPLATES.ASP](http://www.doj.mt.gov/driving/licenseplates.asp))
- FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION – NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY PROGRAM
- FUNDING FOR RURAL AREAS
 - [HTTP://WWW.EPA.GOV/SMARTGROWTH/TOPICS/RURAL_NATIVE_FUNDING.HTM](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/topics/rural_native_funding.htm)
- GIVEN THE LARGE FORESTED AREAS IN THE REGION, THERE MAY BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CARBON MARKET IN THE FUTURE
- SCENIC BYWAY TOLL OR USER FEE



INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- IDAHO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:
 - [HTTP://ITD.IDAHO.GOV/SR2S/HOWTOAPPLY.HTML](http://ITD.IDAHO.GOV/SR2S/HOWTOAPPLY.HTML)
- LOCAL OPTION GAS TAX
- TAX INCREMENT FINANCING
- BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS
- LOCAL HIGHWAY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COUNCIL
 - SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT
- THE FUNDERS NETWORK FOR SMART GROWTH & LIVABLE COMMUNITIES: [HTTP://WWW.FUNDERSNETWORK.ORG/](http://WWW.FUNDERSNETWORK.ORG/)
- THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 - [HTTP://WWW.ACHP.GOV/FUNDING.HTML](http://WWW.ACHP.GOV/FUNDING.HTML)