

11.0 Wayfinding, Interpretation, Gateways and Signage

This chapter will present a general summary of the wayfinding, interpretation and signage found along the HTURB corridor and present opportunities for future gateway development. It is important to first distinguish the difference between these mediums.

National Scenic Byway CMP Point #14

A description of what you plan to do to explain and interpret your byway's significant resources to visitors.

11.1 Wayfinding

Wayfinding (sometimes referred to as waymarking) is much more than just signage. Wayfinding encompasses all of the methods that people use to orient themselves in a particular area or space, and also aides in getting a person from one place to another. Wayfinding can take the form of signage, but it can also be a map, brochure, audio driving tours, website, or a GPS unit. These non-signage forms of wayfinding are often referred to as “soft” wayfinding.

Urban planner Kevin A. Lynch coined the term in his 1960 book *Image of the City*, where he defined wayfinding as “a consistent use and organization of definite sensory cues from the external environment”.

Wayfinding design and planning is the process of organizing information to help users find their way. This information is commonly spatial and environmental and is often the result of a deliberate plan or series of plans. Traditional signage design is only one small component of wayfinding. To be efficient, a good wayfinding plan assesses all of the environmental issues that affect the user’s ability to find their way. A wayfinding plan and/or design approach can produce a high-quality communications solution, because it can identify sources of confusion in the environment, which may be operational, organizational, having to do with nomenclature, or due to the design of the site or resource itself. The wayfinding plan can then resolve the issues and evolve an appropriate solution. The HTURB group declared during the community workshops held for this CMP that they would like to see a full-scale, detailed Wayfinding and Interpretation Assessment Plan (WIAP) produced in the short-term (1-2 years).

11.1.1 Wayfinding Goals and Objectives

The HTURB has very little existing wayfinding in place, both in the form of signage along the corridor, and “soft” wayfinding such as brochures, maps and booklets. The corridor can be difficult to navigate due to many road name changes, turns and deviations, difficult urban areas (Wilmington, Dover), limited or missing street signage and rural areas. The HTURB is in critical need of accurate and efficient wayfinding and a WIAP will be critical to ensuring the Byway traveler’s experience.

Wayfinding Goals and Objectives

- Reflect the corridor's history and culture in wayfinding design solutions
- Enhance the arrival and wayfinding experience along the corridor
- Provide information to assist travelers so they can easily access the corridor's intrinsic resources
- Enhance the HTURB's image as an accessible, attractive, and active destination through distinctive, themed/branded helpful graphics and wayfinding mediums
- Present the travelling public with a unified and cohesive wayfinding system that is recognizable and unique
- Simplify traffic patterns by directing the travelling public along the most desirable routes
- Remove Byway traveler's anxieties and make their experiences more memorable
- Utilize wayfinding to encourage repeat visitation to the corridor
- Coordinate signage with other Byways in the region, especially the HTURB in other states



11.1.2 Wayfinding Categories

The following list of wayfinding categories group the different forms of wayfinding into similar areas:

Gateway/Entrance

Identifies the gateways/entrances to the HTURB corridor and its associated intrinsic resources. These features can be located at the termini of the Byway and also at key locations along the Byway where main access points enter or merge with the HTURB.

Orientation

Identifies direction and distances to resource points and other points of interest.

Identification

Indicates the names of resources and point of interest along the Byway corridor.

Interpretive

Instructs or provides the educational information about a site, resource, or location.

Regulatory

Provides the traveler with rules, laws, or safety information.

Temporary

Provides travelers with information about temporary hazards, special events, or temporary construction (redevelopment, etc.).

11.2 Gateways

As stated above in the wayfinding chapter, gateways identify the HTURB corridor and its associated intrinsic resources to travelers. Gateways can be located at the termini of the Byway and also at key locations along the Byway where main access points enter or merge with the HTURB. Gateways announce the Byway to travelers and offer a sense of destination.

One of the key locations that will be presented in this CMP is located near the Maryland border at the Caulk-Denney Tract parking lot currently owned by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). This site is in an opportune location for a gateway as it announces the HTURB Delaware corridor to travelers entering Delaware and leaving the HTURB in Maryland. It will also provide a key location for Delaware specific interpretation about the HTURB Delaware corridor story and provide a potential site for parking and traveler facilities.

The following section presents some conceptual designs for HTURB gateways. These conceptual designs were presented to the public in June 2012 and comments were collected and passed along to the Steering Committee and DelDOT for further phases of gateway development. The original intent of these gateway designs was for possible construction at the Caulk-Denney Tract for use as a gateway and traveler facility location.

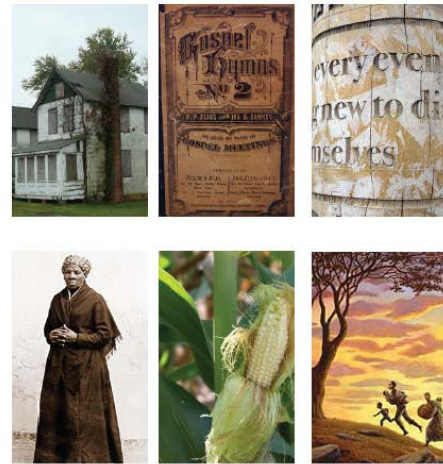
The two (2) most preferred conceptual gateway designs as voted on by the public (during the June 2012 meetings) and the Steering Committee were concepts #2 and #4.

CONCEPT ONE



"SAFE HOUSE" GATEWAY CHARACTER SKETCH

This gateway is reminiscent of a safe house along the underground railroad. A cast iron silhouette illustrates a figure standing in the doorway ushering a safe respite. The words Hope, Flight, Faith and Fear are engraved into the boards of the structure. The background text depicts the words to "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" to pay homage to the hymnals that were used to signal escape.



CHARACTER IMAGES

Top left to lower right: simple residential structures along the byway, Harriet Tubman's hymn book, lettering engraved in wood, Harriet Tubman, agriculture occurring along the byway, artwork of escaping slaves

HARRIET TUBMAN

Underground Railroad Byway



CONCEPT TWO



"BIG DIPPER COLUMN"

The gateway in this concept is a simple iron obelisk with artwork panels (one per side) depicting escaping slaves under a bright night sky. The base is made from traditional clay brick with a limestone cap and plaque. The artwork is intended to be back lit at night to provide a glow to the Big Dipper and sky.



ARTWORK

The artwork depicts a group of escaping slaves under a bright night sky. The image on the left illustrates the Big Dipper. The silhouettes are black powder-coated aluminum panels. The background image is a hand painted scene.



CONCEPT THREE



"STONE MONUMENT GATEWAY"

This gateway monument is of a natural indigenous stone (granite) slab. A single word "Freedom" is carved into the upper portion of the monument. The logo consists of a black iron frame with a silhouette of a forest and Harriet Tubman guiding escaping slaves to freedom. The background image is an artistic rendering of the surrounding countryside.



CHARACTER IMAGES

Top left to lower right: rough hewn granite marker, wrought iron detail, artwork depicting escaping slaves, Harriet Tubman guiding slaves to freedom, State Park monument, artwork example

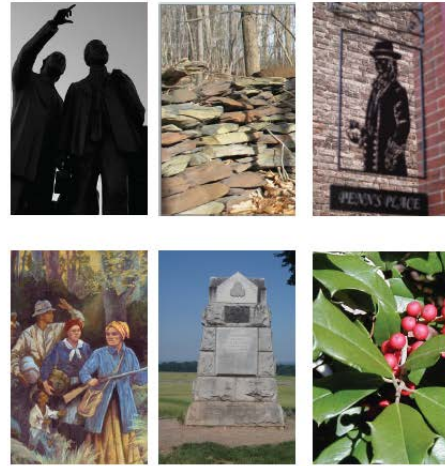


CONCEPT FOUR



"SILHOUETTE PANEL GATEWAY"

This gateway monument is of a natural indigenous stacked stone base with a limestone cap. The upper portion of the monument consists of a silhouette of Harriet Tubman guiding escaping slaves to freedom. The silhouette is made from aluminum panels powder-coated black. The surrounding landscape consists of native pines and the Delaware state tree, the American Holly.



CHARACTER IMAGES

Top left to lower right: statue in silhouette, stacked stone wall, black metal signage, Harriet Tubman guiding slaves to freedom, traditional stone monument, American Holly

HARRIET TUBMAN

Underground Railroad Byway



11.3 Interpretation

As defined by the National Association for Interpretation the definition for interpretation is a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource. (Source: *National Association for Interpretation, 2008*) In essence, interpretation allows for a viewer or user of a resource to receive education and information about the resource. This is a vital function for the Scenic Byway industry as traveler's long for information about a corridor's resources. This section will review interpretation and how it can be used along the HTURB. This section will address different mediums, themes, and principals.

Interpretation can help accomplish the HTURB's Vision, build a knowledgeable constituency for supporting the corridor's goals and strategies, encourage a sense of stewardship among visitors and stakeholders, and help educate the travelling public. Interpretation encourages curiosity and provokes thought. It can be more than words and images. It can be incorporated into buildings and elements without labels or explanation.

11.2.1 Interpretive Mediums

There are a variety of mediums that can be used for the production and delivery of interpretation. Some of these are as follows:

Tours

Travel groups led along the corridor or at specific resources by trained and knowledgeable individuals. Tours will be a critical activity for the HTURB as much of the corridor story is about the movement of freedom seekers and many of these pathways and routes are not

clearly documented or visible, so tour operators can lead travelers along possible perceived routes and enhance visitor's imagination. Night tours could enhance the visitor's imagination if they too experience the difficult journey to be hidden as on traveled.

Signage

Signage may be placed for purposes of sharing information or messages. Signage may also be free standing or incorporated into a building or structure/resource. Interpretive elements might be included with other types of signage such as wayfinding/maps with an interpretive sidebar.

Media/Digital Technology

Devices that use technology to share information or messages such as personal data assistants (PDAs), smart phones, electronic kiosks linked to global positioning systems (GPS), sound wands or listening devices linked to broadcast systems, and low wattage FM radio systems. This is an emerging and ever-advancing area of visitor interpretation. Social media can assist this area of interpretation, including use uploaded videos, input, blogs, or other social media mediums.

Programming

Non-recurring events held for a specified period of time and date(s), such as special events, classes, lectures, symposia, and workshops.

Web Learning

Information and images shared over the internet such as activities, games, curriculum, identification, and graphics.

Exhibits

Three dimensional displays, or activities, designed to be self-explanatory (independent of program or guide).

11.2.2 Interpretive Categories/Themes

The HTURB encompasses the significant themes of Harriet Tubman and the story of the Underground Railroad. In addition, many "side-stories" or "sub-stories" can be tapped into for potential interpretation and increased visitor appreciation. Interpretation should focus on these themes and geographic areas/zones should be developed where these themes are most prominent (Hunn Farm, Meeting Houses, etc.). Examples of possible themes are freedom, slavery and religion.

11.2.3 Interpretive Principals

The following principals are guidelines that interpretive material or mediums should follow:

- **Be appropriate and to the point** - All elements of signage and interpretation along the corridor should be in scale to the use and user.
- **Be of consistent attitude** - Everything seen and experienced by the public should reflect a consistent attitude and philosophy of the HTURB. Publications (fliers,

brochures, announcements, website, etc.) should have a cohesive and harmonious design and style indicating that they emerge from and represent the HTURB.

- **Engage all senses** - When appropriate, use plants or other natural materials for color, texture, smell, light, sound, and scale to tell or enhance a story.
- **Embrace change** – Keep in mind that things will grow, change, and even decay over time. Allow these natural properties to be part of the aesthetic message, and prepare for them in the early design stages.
- **Fit the historic context** - The design of signs and markers should draw from the historical elements of the HTURB without replicating them. Designs can hearken backward, but take initiative to find innovation.
- **Use character befitting the place** - The character of signs should fit within forms and function of the location and region. Configure and juxtapose displays, pathways, buildings, parking, and outdoor interpretive shelters in an effort to retain the naturalistic environment that visitors enjoy. The CSS Manual prepared by DelDOT may be a useful resource to ensure this area of concerns is addressed.
- **Structures and materials tell the story** – Style, design and material types tell the story just as well as words and graphics do. Also, a structure can allow people to circulate in one direction, but not another. It can frame, inhibit, or enhance views. It can allow one to sit, or not, and encourage places for people to converse acoustically, or not. Allow for the materials to reflect the story and the feeling that the story or interpretation is attempting to convey.
- **Place only a few, small, harmonious signs** - As signs, markers and other built elements are physical, man-made items in natural landscape have the potential to distract from the immersive quality of the intrinsic resource. Allow the traveler to feel that they are in a natural and “untouched” setting. Again, the CSS Manual prepared by DelDOT may assist with this.
- **Be unobtrusive** - Locate signs or markers in the landscape so that they are surrounded by vegetation when possible, appearing as if they have been there for a long time even when they are new.
- **Be polite** - All signs and interpretation should have good manners. They should be warm and even imperfect as though they have been influenced by the human hand and mind of a craftsman.
- **Cluster and incorporate** - Wherever possible, interpretive markers should be located near and incorporated into the design of other built elements so that we do not litter the landscape with signs.
- **Use positive language** - When possible, regulations should be stated in positive language, emphasizing what behavior is desired instead of what is not to be done.
- **Communicate effectively** - Interpretation and wayfinding rely on communication. In order to communicate effectively, the HTURB must portray a recognizable identity and brand.
- **Acknowledge contributions** - There is opportunity to place donor recognition at built elements including shelters, benches, graphic panels, and their supports. Ideally, visual recognition (engraved name/symbol, or place, etc.) will occur in a designated place on specific built elements in a standard design style. When possible and appropriate, donor recognition should be consolidated.

11.3 Next Steps

The HTURB Steering Committee should focus on the recommended next steps in an effort to create a wayfinding and interpretation atmosphere along the corridor that achieves the vision and goals of the communities and this CMP:

National Scenic Byway CMP Point #11

A plan to make sure that the number and placement of highway signs will not get in the way of the scenery, but still be sufficient to help tourists find their way. This includes, where appropriate, signs for international tourists who may not speak or read English fluently.

- Conduct an inventory of all existing and planned wayfinding and interpretation along the entire corridor, and possibly the region. This inventory should be in GIS and GPS formats and should contain a condition assessment and a photo log.
- Create an interpretive plan matrix that identifies, for each category, the statement of significance, subthemes, the target audience/market, and what services and media will be used.
- Break the HTURB corridor into interpretive zones or regions (if desired). These zones or regions will represent different themes or subthemes and will be presented with independent challenges and opportunities.
- Coordinate with the Maryland HTURB marketing and branding campaign.
- Address maintenance and operations of the wayfinding and interpretation along the corridor, both existing and planned. Coordination with DelDOT and local municipalities is critical. Also, adherence and a thorough understanding of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is important.
- Create a Wayfinding and Interpretation Design Manual that should be shared with local and state regulatory entities. This Design Manual can be part of the WIAP, if desired.
- Develop a series of prototype signs and panels that others can use in order to be consistent with the planned HTURB wayfinding and interpretation.
- Assess the multi-lingual wayfinding and interpretation needs of the corridor.
- Ensure that the number and placement of signs will not impact traveler safety or the visitor's experience.