



South Douglas Scenic Byway  
Steering Committee Meeting  
May 14, 2021  
12:00 p.m.  
via Microsoft Teams  
Meeting Summary

**Attendees:**

**Community Members:** Bill Thomas, Jan Thomas, Mike Mulcare, Pam Daniell, Tamara Manny, Vanessa Levingston, Jeremiah Parunak, Jessica Parunak, Nick Carse, Kyle Gable, Rick Alan, Emily Lightner, Blair McClure

**Board of Commissioners:** Kelly Robinson

**Planning and Zoning Board:** Kirk Nicholson

**Douglas County Staff:** Ron Roberts, Phil Shafer, Allison Duncan, Karla Poshedly

I. Welcome & Introductions

Ron Roberts opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Each participant was called on to introduce themselves and share their connection to the study area.

II. Project Information

Allison Duncan provided an overview of the project website. The website will be updated with all the latest information on the Scenic Byway designation process. A project blog will keep track of the detailed analysis and documentation performed as a part of the project.

III. Outcomes

Allison Duncan shared a slide with information from the GDOT Scenic Byway Manual. Successful Byway designation will document the intrinsic qualities of the corridor and develop a corridor management plan to preserve and enhance those qualities. Designation is an economic development tool that contributes to the maintaining unique areas of the State. The only real limitation on development is the prohibition of new billboards along a designated corridor, unless the local government chooses to take additional measures through zoning or other regulatory tools.

Meeting participants offered the following other insights as to how to measure the successful outcomes of the project:

- Enhance coordination with the community for successful outcomes along the corridor
- Enhance coordination with the Planning and Zoning Board and Board of Commissioners to express the desires of community members along the corridor
- Information and discussion on proposed developments in the study area, including The Preserve and Foxhall
- Identify tools to enhance Douglas County and the State of Georgia
- Support the preservation and enhancement of the Byway Corridor
- Identify how the rural areas of Douglas County support the greater intensity of development in the more urban areas, as well as how the urban areas of the County support the rural areas
- Document appropriate economic development strategies that align with the context of existing development and preservation goals of the corridor



- Identify different character areas and develop strategies to implement the desired outcomes in each character area
- Identify appropriate design alternatives for infrastructure improvements and other development (i.e. cell towers) to preserve the character of the corridor and surrounding areas

#### IV. Process

Allison Duncan presented an overview of the process for designation. Douglas County has successfully achieved several initial milestones, including submittal and acceptance of the required GDOT data sheet for the proposed corridor. The Board of Commissioners have adopted a Resolution of support for the project, and a project Steering Committee has been assembled. Douglas County is finishing a video about the corridor, as a socially-distanced alternative to the recommended tours. Douglas County will also coordinate in-person tours upon request.

Critical next steps include preparing and submitting the formal application and developing the Corridor Management Plan. Staff intends to undertake the responsibility of preparing all documents with the guidance of the Steering Committee and feedback from the community.

#### V. Timeline and Milestones

Five Steering Committee meetings are proposed between May and December 2021. Additionally, a minimum of two public meetings will be held in 3Q and 4Q 2021 when the Corridor Management Plan is under development.

Steering Committee members suggested that staff consider additional opportunities for public engagement. The following ideas were proposed:

- Additional meetings with targeted groups be scheduled upon request
- Opportunities for people to continue to access in-person meetings through a virtual link
- Work with Board of Commissioners to provide regular updates on the Scenic Byway planning process in conjunction with their regular meetings, particularly in the context of aligning with specific discussion on capital improvements
- Small “open house” opportunities for staff to be available at key locations on a set schedule to answer questions, such as at the Boundary Waters aquatic center and Dog River Library

#### VI. Existing Conditions

Allison Duncan presented an overview of the proposed Scenic Byway Corridor. For purposes of analysis and plan development, she proposed the entire length of the corridor be broken down into the following five segments based on their existing character:

- Segment #1 – intersection of Highway 92 to the Campbellton roundabout
  - This segment contains a number of sites that contribute to the documented intrinsic qualities of the area, including historic, cultural, agricultural, and recreational assets.
  - This corridor contains a greater degree of suburban style development, including two large tracts that have recently inquired about redevelopment for higher density housing options.
  - Feedback from the committee suggested that we should analyze existing population densities; any non-residential development should be closer to the intersection with Highway 92 and/ or limited to areas already zoned
- Segment #2 – Campbellton roundabout to the reservoir



- This segment contains a number of sites that contribute to the documented intrinsic qualities of the area, including historic, cultural, agricultural and recreational assets. This area also has significant scenic potential in the preservation of the existing tree canopy and rural residential development pattern.
- Existing development inquiries focus mostly on the completion of existing residential subdivisions that are already platted.
- Feedback from the committee suggested that we should highlight the Estate Density Overlay, which was put in place to protect the Bear Creek Reservoir when the Dog River Reservoir became the primary drinking water supply. In times of drought, the Bear Creek Reservoir serves as a back up to the Dog River Reservoir.
- Segment #3 – The Dog River Reservoir to the east side of Capps Ferry Road on the south side of Hwy 166
  - This segment is defined by two large mixed use developments – Foxhall and The Preserve.
  - Both developments are tied to regulating plans and specific zoning categories unique to their particular uses. Both projects are proposed to be developed with resort style amenities.
  - Development of these projects should mitigate the potential impacts to the areas identified as having intrinsic qualities for the rest of the corridor.
- Segment #4 – the west side of Capps Ferry Road to the county line on the south side of Hwy 166
  - This segment is defined by several historic communities, including McWhorter, Hannah and Fairplay.
  - This area appears to have an increased incidence of residential development on both large, rural lots, and in existing residential subdivisions.
  - There is a solid civic presence in the community, including schools, parks and religious institutions. But there is limited commercial development to serve the community.
- Segment #5 – The north side of Highway 166 from the Dog River and Dog River Reservoir to the county line
  - This segment is largely protected by the Dog River Watershed Basin. Residential development is restricted to 3 acre density and the Water and Sewer Authority discourage non-residential zoning approvals. Both residential and non-residential development have strict impervious surface restrictions.

Generally, steering committee members supported looking at the corridor through the lens of those five segments to evaluate intrinsic qualities and corridor management issues. Members offered the following thoughts:

- Higher intensity development in the eastern part of the county balances lesser intensity development in the western part of the county
- The John Sevier Highway in Knoxville TN may be a good model to look at for standards and regulations
- The term “development” is used rather generically; we need to better define what we are referring to when we talk about development



- Consider developing some sort of Mission or Goal Statement as a part of the Corridor Management Plan process
- Consider undertaking outreach processes, such as Town Halls in specific areas of the proposed byway corridor
- Consider undertaking an outreach process to the various HOAs for subdivisions along the proposed byway corridor
- Identify opportunities for using both advocacy tools and regulatory tools to implement the outcomes of the Corridor Management Plan
  - Limited access
  - Higher development standards
  - Mitigate/ limit congestion on the corridor
  - Don't lose sight of the engineering & transportation functions of the corridor
- Allison Duncan will undertake some one-on-one follow up conversations with Steering Committee members before the next meeting in June.
- Allison Duncan requested that members review the list of potential stakeholders, and provide the names of any additional individuals or groups that would need to be contacted as a result of this process