

Approved:

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Department of Transportation

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM

PURPOSE:

This procedure establishes the process by which public roads in Florida are determined eligible and designated as Florida Scenic Highways, or nominated as National Scenic Byways. This procedure also outlines the operational tasks associated with the Florida Scenic Highways Program.

AUTHORITY:

Section 20.23(3)(a), Florida Statutes (F.S.)
Section 334.048(3), F.S.

REFERENCES:

Section 335.093, F.S.
Rule 14-15.016, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Scenic Highways
Rule 14-10.004(4)(c), F.A.C., Outdoor Advertising Permits
National Scenic Byways Program Interim Policy, May 18, 1995
National Scenic Byways Program Application

SCOPE:

This procedure is applicable to the State Scenic Highway Coordinator, District Maintenance Engineers, District Traffic Operations, District Scenic Highway Coordinators, State Outdoor Advertising Office, Scenic Highway Advisory Committee, and the State Survey and Mapping Office.

BACKGROUND:

The National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) was established in 1991 and prompted the development of state programs across the country. In 1993, legislation was passed authorizing the Florida Department of Transportation (Department) to establish an official program, and the Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) was launched in 1996.

Public roads designated by the Department as Scenic Highways are so designated to preserve, maintain, protect, and enhance Florida's intrinsic qualities. These intrinsic qualities include cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, natural, and scenic resources. Scenic Highways improve local quality of life and enhance the experience of travelers. As of September 2015,

there are 25 designated Florida Scenic Highways, five of which are also designated as National Scenic Byways, and one as an All-American Road.

1. PROCESS

The Florida Scenic Highways Program is comprised of two phases: **Eligibility** and **Implementation** as described below.

1.1 ELIGIBILITY PHASE

The District Scenic Highway Coordinator (DSHC) will provide information and guidance to prospective scenic highway communities, or any existing Byway Organization seeking a corridor extension. The State Scenic Highway Coordinator (Coordinator) will provide support as needed to the DSHC. The Eligibility Phase consists of three primary steps:

1.1.1 Letter of Intent

The DSHC will receive and review Letters of Intent (LOI) from any person or group seeking a roadway's designation as a scenic highway or corridor extension. The DSHC shall review the LOI and evaluate any concerns raised by District Program offices. Each DSHC will provide a written response to LOIs within 30 days of receipt. The response shall indicate one of the following:

- (A) The LOI is found acceptable and the applicant may form a Byway Organization and proceed to Step 2 in the Eligibility Phase.
- (B) The applicant needs to provide additional information to the DSHC before a determination can be made. If this additional information is not provided within six months of notification, the applicant must submit a new LOI and adhere to the program requirements in effect at the time of restart.
- (C) The LOI is complete, but the proposed route cannot be considered for FSHP designation at this time.

The LOI response letter will be sent electronically from the DSHC to the applicant, with original to follow via US mail.

For approved LOIs, the DSHC will work with the Byway Organization to establish a designation schedule and forward approved LOI electronically to the Coordinator for file and future reference.

1.1.2 Byway Story, Byway Inventory and Documentation of Community Commitment

During this step, the DSHC will provide a kick-off meeting for the Byway Organization with assistance from the Coordinator. The DSHC will describe how to create a Byway Story, Byway Inventory and Documentation of Community Commitment. Examples of each will be provided to the Byway Organization.

The Byway Story, Byway Inventory and Documentation of Community Commitment must be submitted by the Byway Organization to the respective DSHC within 18 months of the kick-off meeting. The DSHC will distribute the documents to the Coordinator and other DSHC, who will then have 30 days from receipt to review the documents and forward written comments to the originating DSHC. Based on this review, one of the following will occur:

- (A) The DSHC will notify the Byway Organization that the documents are complete and will be submitted to the Scenic Highway Advisory Committee during the next scheduled meeting.
- (B) The DSHC from the originating District will compile and provide written comments to the Byway Organization and instruct the organization to resubmit the documents to the DSHC at least 45 days prior to the Scenic Highway Advisory Committee (SHAC) meeting at which the documents will be reviewed.
- (C) The Byway Organization will be advised that the proposed designation should not continue for reasons identified in comments provided by the DSHC.

Thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the documents will be reviewed, documents will be forwarded by the Coordinator to members of the SHAC for their review. SHAC members are expected to comment on all Byway Story, Byway Inventory and Community Commitment documents during specified SHAC meetings and make one of the following recommendations:

- (A) The Byway Organization should proceed to Eligibility Phase Step 3.
- (B) The documents need to be revised as directed in the SHAC comments. The SHAC will advise whether the revised documents 1) require additional revisions, or 2) are adequate as confirmed by review of the DSHC. Once the revisions have been accepted by the SHAC or DSHC, the Byway Organization can proceed to Eligibility Phase Step 3.

If the documents are not sufficiently revised within 12 months, the Byway Organization must start again at Step 1 of the Eligibility Phase, provide a new LOI and adhere to the program requirements in effect at the time of restart.

SHAC members will provide written comments to the Coordinator after the meeting. The Coordinator will forward the comments to the DSHC. These comments will be made available by the DSHC to the Byway Organization no later than 30 days after the SHAC meeting.

1.1.3 Byway Management Plan and Year-One Work Plan

During this step, the DSHC will provide a kick-off meeting for the Byway Organization with assistance from the Coordinator. The DSHC will describe how to create a Byway Management Plan and a Year-One Work Plan to the Byway Organization. Examples of each will be provided.

When the Byway Management Plan and Year-One Work Plan are submitted by the Byway Organization to the respective DSHC, the DSHC will distribute the documents to the Coordinator and other DSHC who will have 30 days from receipt to review the documents and forward written comments to the originating DSHC. The DSHC from the originating District will compile and

provide written comments to the Byway Organization with instructions to resubmit the documents at least 45 days prior to the SHAC meeting at which the documents will be reviewed.

Thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the documents will be reviewed, all Byway Management Plans and Year-One Work Plans will be forwarded by the DSHC through the Coordinator to members of the SHAC. Prior to the SHAC meeting, SHAC members are expected to review all Byway Management Plan and Year-One Work Plan documents, prepare written comments, and offer oral comments during specified SHAC meetings. At the conclusion of the discussion during the SHAC meeting, the SHAC will:

- (A) Recommend to the Secretary designation of the proposed route as a Florida Scenic Highway, or
- (B) Recommend designation of the proposed route as a Florida Scenic Highway contingent upon revisions to the Byway Management Plan and/or Year-One Work Plan as outlined in the SHAC comments. These revisions are to be verified by the DSHC and Coordinator before there is a recommendation to the Secretary that the proposed route be designated as a Florida Scenic Highway.

If any requested revisions are not submitted within 12 months, the Byway Organization must start again at Step 1 of the Eligibility Phase and adhere to the program requirements in effect at the time of restart.

The Coordinator shall maintain a record of SHAC meetings and written comments. These comments will be made available to the Byway Organization no later than 30 days after the SHAC meeting.

When the SHAC recommends a public road for designation as a Florida Scenic Highway, or when the DSHC and Coordinator confirm eligibility for designation, the Coordinator will prepare a designation letter for the Secretary's signature. The letter will be addressed to the Byway Organization, and copy the appropriate District Secretary and DSHC, the State Outdoor Advertising Office, and State Scenic Highway Coordinator. The signed letter, accompanied by a byway map, will be sent electronically with the original to follow via US mail.

1.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Upon written notice of designation from the Secretary, the DSHC will notify the **State Outdoor Advertising Office** to record routes and ensure compliance with billboard regulations on designated scenic highways in accordance with Rule 14-10.004(4)(c), F.A.C. The Coordinator will provide appropriate byway limits to the **State Survey and Mapping Office**.

FSHP Signage: The DSHC will work with the **District Traffic Operations Engineer** to develop and approve sign plans for FSHP routes and ensure compliance with approved standards. If a designated route includes non-state roads, the DSHC will work with the local government(s) and/or agencies to have the sign plan approved. The DSHC will complete **Form 175-020-09** to order all signs specified in the sign plan (state road and non-state road segments) and submit the form to the Department Sign Fabrication Shop. Upon fabrication, the DSHC will distribute the completed signs to the district maintenance yards (or appropriate local government and/or

agency) to be installed based on the approved signing plan. Requests for replacement signs should be made by the Byway Organization to the DSHC.

1.2.1 Implementing and Updating the Byway Management Plan

After designation, the Byway Organization may update the Byway Management Plan as conditions or plans change. All Byway Management Plan Updates will be reviewed by the Coordinator and the DSHC from all Districts. Written comments will be provided to the submitting DSHC within 30 days of receipt of the update request.

The DSHC will compile and provide written comments to the Byway Organizations submitting Byway Management Plan Updates within their respective Districts, and instruct them to resubmit the document at least 45 days prior to the SHAC meeting at which the Byway Management Plan Update will be reviewed.

At least 30 days prior to SHAC meetings, Byway Management Plan Updates pending SHAC review will be forwarded to SHAC members by the Coordinator. The SHAC will review updates, provide comments to the Byway Organization during the meeting, and submit written comments to the Coordinator after the meeting. Meeting minutes and written SHAC comments will be provided to the Byway Organization by the DSHC no later than 30 days after the SHAC meeting.

The DSHC will follow up with the Byway Organization within six months to ensure that SHAC comments have been incorporated into the document.

1.2.2 Developing, Implementing and Keeping Current an Annual Work Plan

Byway Organizations must submit an Annual Work Plan by November 15 of each year describing the work to be completed in the upcoming calendar year. Annual Work Plans will be reviewed by the Coordinator and the respective DSHC. The DSHC will compile and provide any written comments to byway organizations within 30 days of receipt of the Annual Work Plan.

1.2.3 Submitting a Byway Annual Report to the FSHP

All designated scenic highways are required to submit a Byway Annual Report by February 1 of each year. The DSHC will review all Byway Annual Reports submitted within their respective Districts by April 1, summarize the reports, and deliver a District report during the next scheduled SHAC meeting.

The Coordinator will initiate an annual reporting process and publish a FSHP Annual Report no later than the first quarter of the fiscal year.

2. ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 DISTRICT SCENIC HIGHWAY COORDINATORS

1. Respond to information requests from the public about the FSHP.
2. Maintain routine contact with byway organizations in respective Districts.
3. Maintain "Byway Leader" contact lists for Districts.
4. Forward routine information and requests from the Coordinator to byway organizations in respective Districts.
5. Participate in statewide DSHC training sessions, meetings and conference calls.
6. Assist with FSHP training for byway organizations.
7. Participate in SHAC meetings as needed.
8. Establish a schedule for the review of National Scenic Byways Program applications originating within the District.
9. Review and evaluate applications for the National Scenic Byways Program with assistance from the Coordinator.
10. Monitor the FDOT work program for projects planned for designated scenic highways.
11. Serve as liaison between byway organizations and FDOT regarding byway signing and other related byway needs.
12. Assist in developing policy revisions to the FSHP.

2.2 SCENIC HIGHWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Attend training sessions.
2. Participate in SHAC meetings as scheduled by the State Scenic Highway Coordinator.
3. Periodically review and, if necessary, assist in developing policy revisions to the FSHP.
4. Review and evaluate applications for the National Scenic Byways Program.
5. Recommend to the Secretary scenic highways appropriate for designation as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads.
6. Coordinate with other Department offices, state agencies, and other related organizations to help promote and integrate scenic highways and associated programs.
7. Periodically review state and nationally designated scenic highways and make recommendations to the Secretary for their continuation as scenic highways.

2.3 STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY COORDINATOR

1. Respond to information requests about the FSHP (public and government).
2. Chair training sessions and meetings.
3. Chair SHAC meetings and provide staff support.
4. Monitor the status of byway efforts around the state. Provide updates as needed to FDOT management.
5. Provide technical assistance and develop and offer training to the Districts, byway organizations and others as needed to ensure implementation of the FSHP and NSBP in a uniform manner.
6. Provide assistance to the DSHC in evaluating applications to the National Scenic Byways Program.
7. Review and evaluate applications to the National Scenic Byways Program prior to forwarding to the SHAC.

8. Maintain program files.
9. Function as project manager for the statewide scenic highway consultant contract.
10. Revise policy when necessary in order to respond to the needs of the Department or the Florida Scenic Highways Community.
11. Maintain the informational tools necessary to promote the FSHP.
12. Assure that all SHAC meetings comply with Florida's public records and open meetings laws.

2.4 SECRETARY, FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1. Determine eligibility of proposed scenic highways.
2. Determine eligibility of state scenic highways to be nominated to the National Scenic Byways Program.
3. Determine continuation of corridors as Florida Scenic Highways.

3. REVISIONS TO THE FSHP REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE

Periodic changes in the federal or state programs require flexibility to update the FSHP Requirements and Guidance quickly to remain current with program mandates. All revisions to the FSHP Requirements and/or Guidance will be developed and issued by the State Scenic Highway Coordinator in consultation with the SHAC, DSHC, and FSHP stakeholders.

4. DISTRIBUTION

The Coordinator will make the FSHP Requirements and Guidance available to FHWA, District Scenic Highway Coordinators, all SHAC members and all byway organizations in Florida.

The Coordinator will distribute public information and give public notice of meetings and updates to the FSHP Requirements and Guidance.

5. TRAINING

The Coordinator will develop and deliver a training program for Department personnel, general purpose local governments and citizens regarding the FSHP Requirements and Guidance.

6. FORMS

Form No. 175-020-09, Sign Fabrication