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# Introduction

## Celebrating Life on the Upper Eastern Shore

The Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway celebrates life on Maryland's Eastern Shore, one of the last truly special landscapes in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The Byway links together the region's most unique resources—its working landscapes and waterfronts, historic town centers, recreation sites, and pristine natural areas—and provides travelers with opportunities to enjoy and learn about the area's rich history and culture while gaining an appreciation for the traditions and working life of local watermen, farmers, and merchants.

The Byway, which includes MD Routes 18 and 213 running from Kent Island to Chesapeake City, with an extension on MD Route 20 to Rock Hall and MD Route 445 to Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, serves as the single thread tying together important places and interesting experiences that define what is most special about life on the Upper Eastern Shore.

## Creating the Plan

This Plan has been prepared by the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Alliance to guide local and regional initiatives aimed at improving conditions and conserving resources along an 83-mile stretch of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway, a state-designated scenic route running through Cecil, Queen Anne's and Kent Counties. The Plan offers a vision and goals for the

Byway's future, an inventory of special qualities, a tool kit of strategies and initiatives, and an implementation plan.

The Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Alliance is a unique partnership between Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties. The Alliance is composed of a Management Team and Advisory Committee. The Management Team includes representatives from the planning and tourism offices of each county with welcome assistance provided by the Maryland State Highway Administration's Scenic Byway Program and Department of Planning. The Advisory Committee—with citizen members appointed by the three county commissions—represents the diverse



Waterviews are among the Byway's most precious assets.



Fishing remains an important industry along the Byway and throughout the region.

interests along the Byway, including businesses, property owners, towns, environmental organizations and heritage tourism groups.

Active community engagement was a central feature of the planning process. Hundreds of people in the region participated in Byway planning events sponsored by the Alliance. Individuals and communities along the Byway were involved in the planning effort from start to finish. The Alliance learned about local and regional issues and tested ideas and proposals through interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, community workshops held in locations along the route, briefings with public officials, and presentations to local chambers of commerce, conservation organizations and civic groups.

Participation in events and activities was encouraged through two rounds of mailings to Byway stakeholders, including *all* owners of property along the 83-mile route. Local papers provided excellent coverage of events, thus extending the Alliance's outreach to the entire region.

To support the planning process, the Alliance retained assistance from a team of consultants led by Mary Means & Associates, Inc., a community planning firm

known for its experience developing conservation and improvement strategies for sensitive places in a variety of contexts, from small towns to entire heritage regions. Planning team members included URS Corp and Economics Research Associates.

Planning activities were funded in part through a Scenic Byway grant from the Federal Highway Administration, administered by the State Scenic Byway Program, with matching funds from Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties.



## Benefits of Recognition

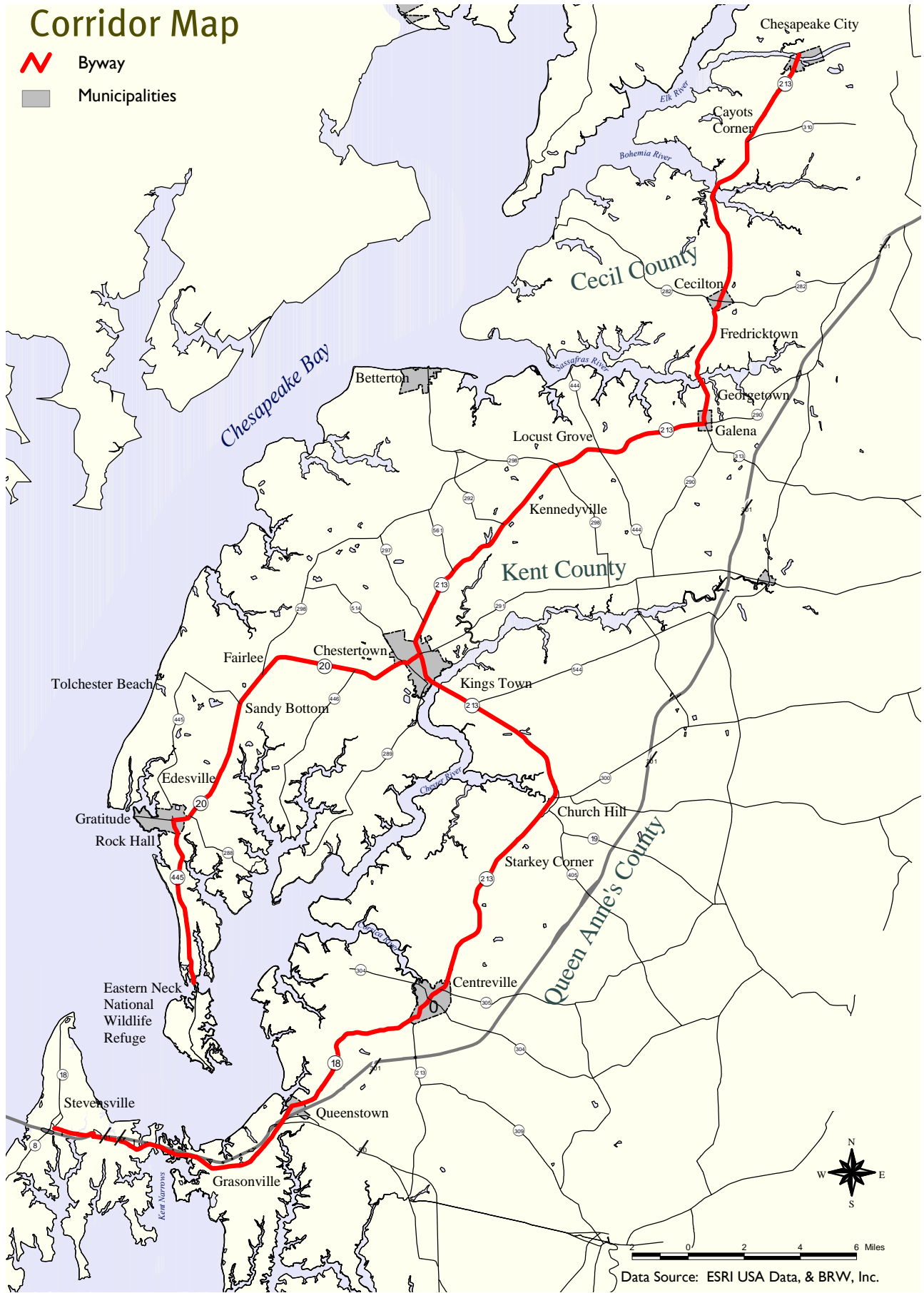
Achieving the route's recognition as a National Scenic Byway is a central focus of the Alliance, and completion of the Corridor Management Plan is an essential step in garnering such recognition.

Byway planning and national recognition are important for the region for several reasons.

- Completion of a Corridor Management Plan makes the Byway eligible for grant funding under the National Scenic Byway Program. Through the year 2003, approximately \$25 million annually in grants will be available to fund a wide range of projects along designated scenic byways.
- Unlike other transportation and conservation related grant programs, byway grants require localities and organizations to provide only a 20% match in funds.
- National Scenic Byway recognition improves the Alliance's ability to compete for grants and assistance from a variety of foundations and state and federal sources.
- The Byway's inclusion on state and national maps and guides supports local efforts to strengthen local economies through heritage and eco-tourism.

# Corridor Map

-  Byway
-  Municipalities



Data Source: ESRI USA Data, & BRW, Inc.

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- Participation in the Plan’s implementation is voluntary. Neither the Plan’s completion nor the Byway’s designation nationally diminishes local control over decisions affecting land use and development along the corridor.
  - The planning effort provides a model for cooperation across municipal and county boundaries.

## Plan Organization

This first chapter of the Plan provides information regarding sponsors, participants and engagement activities. Chapter 2 documents the significance of the Byway and the resources it provides access to. Also included in this chapter is information on on-going stewardship and management activities, travel conditions, and the context for heritage and eco-tourism in the region.

The Alliance’s vision and goals for the Byway are included in Chapter 3, along with

background information on strategies and recommendations.

Planning strategies and recommendations are provided in Chapters 4-6. Chapter 4 focuses on ways to improve the Byway experience, from better interpretation of the region’s heritage to improvements in wayfinding signage and access to special places. Chapter 5 includes recommendations for improving and preserving conditions along the route. Strategies in this chapter address historic preservation, farmland conservation, and town gateway and commercial strip enhancements. In Chapter 6, recommendations are offered for improving conditions along the Byway and within its right-of-way. Traffic-calming, roadside maintenance, and the accommodation of a range of users are addressed.

Implementation strategies, including an approach to long term management and stewardship, are offered in the final chapter.