

Tracks Across Borders Scenic and Historic Byway



A two-state Scenic and Historic Byway
between Durango, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico

CONCEPTUAL PLAN for COLORADO NOMINATION APPLICATION

December 2014



Tracks Across Borders Scenic and Historic Byway

Conceptual Plan

A Component of the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway nomination application

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Overview and Purpose

The Conceptual Plan is a required component of the nomination application for designation as a Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway. This plan provides the basic framework that will assist in organizing and defining the efforts of the *Tracks Across Borders Scenic and Historic Byway* Charter Commission, hereinafter referred to as the “TABB Charter Commission.” This recently formed group responsible for charting the course of Colorado’s newest Scenic and Historic Byway.

This document is organic and fluid with the purpose of providing a foundation for initial and on-going byway operations, creative concepts, planning ideas and consideration of logistical practicalities and general guidance. In the future, with leadership of the TABB Charter Commission and the use of this Conceptual Plan, a full Corridor Management Plan may be developed as needed.

The key aspects of this Conceptual Plan include:

- ✓ Definition of the roles, responsibilities, leadership and governance of the TABB Charter Commission and each of its partners and community members
- ✓ Action steps necessary to establish and market the route as an official State-Designated Scenic and Historic Byway corridor, taking into account the conditions already documented in the nomination application (e.g. summary of the corridor’s existing conditions, documentation of adjacent properties, levels of traffic, potential safety considerations, visitation rules and other important national, cultural and historic characteristics.)
- ✓ Identification of improvements that will be necessary for the TABB to be a viable heritage tourism resource that is both traveler friendly and economically advantageous to the region, knitting together the multiple partners, cultures, tribes and governments that uniquely define this dual-border byway effort, tracking across cultural, governmental and historical borders.
- ✓ Strategies for the preservation and restoration of the TABB’s significant and irreplaceable resources, and for the improved management and marketing of the region.
- ✓ Suggested guidelines for definition and management of a regional marketing plan for the byway.

Six key areas are addressed to the extent possible, recognizing that the leadership of any new byway requires time to structure operations; fostering and growing a base of human and financial support as desired visitation patterns are defined and developed.

1. Protection of the Byway

a. **Administrative Body**

The eleven (11) member bi-state Charter Commission has been formed to help guide the nomination and initial conceptual planning process. Alternate/support representatives for each organization and additional members are welcome. They will determine a leadership structure, desired sub-committees, specific start-up tasks, individual or team roles and responsibilities, a meeting schedule, agendas, fundraising ideas and other essential elements of advancing the byway following designation. It is anticipated that the Charter Commission will meet with CDOT Byway Coordination staff and Commissioners for coaching and guidance as needed.

The Charter Commission shall be governed by an organizational charter or plan documenting the mission and purpose of the team, and providing the team a roadmap for how they intend to do business. The plan/charter also represents an agreement among team members on how the team will work as an empowered body partnership in making binding decisions and sharing accountability for delivering quality products/services that meet user needs in a timely and cost efficient way. This plan/charter will be a “living document,” revising it as team conditions change. Charter will include:

- Purpose
- Byway background and project/program description
- Mission & objectives
- Team composition
 - TABB Charter Commission – terms of three (3) years or until a replacement is seated – new members approved by existing commission members:

Colorado

- Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge RR – Jim Harper
- Chimney Rock National Monument - Paul Blackman, USFS Chimney Rock Unit.
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) (appointment by Tribal Council pending)
- One representative for Archuleta County and one for La Plata County
- Navajo State Park - Doug Secrist, Park Manager & Joe Lewandowski, PIO State Parks & Wildlife
- Durango, Colorado - Grace Shepherd, Durango Area Tourism Office
- Archuleta County CO - Muriel Eason, Pagosa Springs

- La Plata County CO – Naomi Riess, La Plata County Historic Preservation Review Commission

New Mexico

- Rio Arriba County – Christopher Madrid, Director, Economic Development
 - Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad - John Bush, President and General Manager
 - Jicarilla Apache Nation - Clyde Vicenti, Jicarilla Cultural Center Director
 - Chama, New Mexico - Scott Flury, Marketing Director for the Apache Nugget Corporation (Wild Horse Casino, and member of the Village Council for Chama, New Mexico
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- Form subcommittees (TBD) made up of commission members and other interested parties to propose plans
 - PR/Communications
 - Public engagement coordinator
 - Historic Preservation focus
 - Fundraising
 - Marketing plans
 - Website
 - Signage and way finding
 - Create a team of “resource advisors” to delve further into nomination criteria categories to incorporate into marketing (scenic, historical, educational, scientific, geological, natural, wildlife, cultural and recreational.) Specifically, a group of resource advisors focused on the cultural and ethnic diversity would make sure these aspects are recognized and honored. This group would provide advice on selected issues, additional information as needed and help with the development of interpretive information. Importantly, it could provide preservation advice and information to balance tourism and promotional efforts.
 - Measurement of economic impacts – establish baseline and process/methodology of measuring progress of: average daily traffic counts, number of visitors inquiries, lodging and other metrics. Census of businesses along the route and survey to determine growth of those businesses over time.
 - Team roles and responsibilities
 - Co-Chairs for each County to coordinate overall direction and plans
 - One or more VP’s
 - Treasurer – Chief financial officer for budgeting and financial management
 - Secretary – to document meeting minutes, plans, etc.
 - Decisions to be voted on by entire commission.

- Meetings: conference calls monthly or more frequently as needed with live meetings recommended quarterly.
- Fundraising/grant writing
- Social media coordinator

b. Tasks

- Finalize nomination application for submittal to CDOT Byway Commission staff
- Gain official approval for the byway – Target April 2015 - CDOT
- Incorporate appointee(s) representing SUIT into the TABB Commission
- Ratify vision and mission statements
- Ratify name for the byway
- Develop overall goals
 - Financial strategy and budget including funding targets
 - Create a web site/app including route guide and interpretive information, etc.
 - Draft a Corridor Management Plan if needed – build on draft nomination and add details and inventory of interesting aspects – begin with what is and develop plans for improvements and aspirations to work toward, sequenced by priority. (The *Silver Thread Byway* has a robust and excellent, readable plan to use as a template.)
 - Promote usage of the byway through various channels, print and electronic media
 - Promote resources along the byway: scenic, historic, creative, recreational, cultural, etc.
 - Educate public to preserve, protect and appreciate the resources
 - Reclaim resources, such as historic structures at Pagosa Junction (Gato) and Juanita that have deteriorated with time
 - Improve safety and comfort along the byway; engage the Bureau of Indian Affairs (two separate offices) and Archuleta County public roads division to accomplish the long-planned-for road improvements
 - Add comfort stations
 - Create a plan for financial security of the byway
 - Develop and execute public engagement plan
 - Identify constituents/stakeholders who have not yet been reached
 - Engage all tourism-related agencies to coordinate promotions and maximize budget (Chambers, Visitor Centers, Lodging Association, Chimney Rock Interpretive Association (CRIA), Navajo State Park, Arboles, Region 9 EDD and other economic development groups, etc.)
 - Engage the general public (meetings, tours, events, etc.)
 - Leverage existing events then build as budget allows (Pagosa Springs, Chimney Rock, Navajo State Park, etc.)
 - Leverage events on or nearby the byway to promote usage of the byway and area attractions

- Fund and create signage for key points not already covered (in Archuleta County, Pagosa Junction and Juanita are primary—Navajo Lake State Park is already well-developed as a tourism destination)
- Measure economic impacts of the byway with baseline and periodic reassessments: Average Daily Traffic counts, website visits/app usage, visitor center activity, lodging activity, census of businesses along the route and survey their growth over time.
- Add goals / timeline for development of other marketing / information strategies. Start with the brochure, map & website - add a book, an App, QR codes, phased signage, CD, radio spots (as Climax Mine has). Grow media over time with additional funding. This same information is appropriate elsewhere in this Conceptual Plan.

2. Development of an In-depth Corridor Management Plan

Build on draft nomination, adding details and inventory of interesting aspects; begin with what is and develop plans for improvements and aspirations to work toward.

a. **Vision Statement** (revised by the Charter Commission, November 2014)

The Tracks Across Borders Scenic and Historic Byway provides a unique adventure on paved and remote back roads following the route of the historic Denver and Rio Grande Railroad between Durango, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico. The Byway offers opportunities to enjoy, learn about and appreciate the natural and cultural history of the sovereign nations of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and of the early pioneers of southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico

Mission statement: currently no well-defined Mission Statement exists; developing one is a top priority of the Charter Commission.

b. **Formal and Informal Education**

A wide variety of opportunities exist to inform the public about the byway and include (though are not limited to) the following:

- Self-tour guides highlighting features along the route and noteworthy features/history
- Videos/films
 - Research previously produced documentaries and movies featuring the area (see <http://cumbrestoltec.com/>, etc.)
 - Engage local filmmakers and Four Corners Film Office to invite and encourage more future films/documentaries
 - Show tourist films and PSA's in local visitors centers, on YouTube and local movie theatres
- PowerPoint presentations
 - Use for community engagement

- Use for presentations to local tourism and government agencies, civic/membership organizations
- Website (Volunteers are needed to research other Byway's websites for ideas; the TABB website will be linked to CDOT's Byway's page)
 - One web site strategy for entire byway
- Facebook
 - One Facebook strategy for entire byway
- Other social media
 - One social media strategy for entire byway; could be one website with links to a variety of programs and apps, (e.g. Instagram, QR codes, other media etc.)
- Special Events (initially focused on existing events)
 1. Chimney Rock – monthly full moon programs, night sky programs, visions of Chimney Rock, solstice and equinox programs, Life at Chimney Rock Festival, Puebloan Pottery Workshop, Native American Cultural Gathering *see 2014 calendar <http://www.chimneyrockco.org/calendar.php> see full info at <http://www.chimneyrockco.org/index.htm>*
 2. Navajo Lake activities and events - <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/Navajo>
 3. Four Corners Motorcycle Rally
 4. Pagosa Springs events – PS Chamber site
 5. Folkwest – Four Corners Folk Festival 9/4- 9/5/15 and Pagosa Folk 'n' Bluegrass Festival 6/5-6/7/15
 6. Southern Ute events
 7. Cumbres & Toltec events
 8. SUIT Cultural Center
 9. Sky Ute Casino
 10. Durango & Silverton RR & Museum
 11. Downtown Durango
 12. Animas Museum
 13. Southwest Center
 14. Railfest – October
 15. Heritage Days – October
 16. Fiesta Days – July
 17. Rodeos in Ignacio and Durango
 18. Ironhorse - May
- News releases and editorial content
- Printed material, brochures, guidebooks
- Work with the local public radio station – KSUT located on SUIT headquarters in Ignacio.
- Outreach to schools
 1. Teacher's guide to the byway
 2. History classes
 3. Internships
 4. Add FLC & Southwest Center everywhere appropriate

c. Economic Development and Resource Preservation:

The TABB Charter Commission will identify agencies and local government departments, key individuals, policies and legislation in place, plus those needed to identify opportunities for resource protection including natural features, historical/legacy artifacts and archaeological sites. Ultimately, the purpose of this work is to ultimately determine and evaluate economic development opportunities including heritage and agricultural tourism-themed small business development. Action steps include:

- Measurement of economic impacts as previously discussed
- Engage Region 9 EDD and NM Economic Development, Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation, La Plata Economic Development Alliance, Chambers in Ignacio, Durango, Pagosa Springs, Chama; Visitor & Welcome Centers, Lodging Association, CRIA, Navajo Lake State Park, Arboles, SUIT Marketing/Advertising or ED and other economic development groups, etc.
- History Colorado for designation of historic sites and grant funding for restoration.
- Colorado Creative Industries to highlight and feature artisans along the route.
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe – to feature tribal economic drivers.
- Jicarilla Apache Nation – to feature tribal economic drivers.
- Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
- Research other relevant agencies and policies at the regional and state level

d. Involvement of Public Agencies

The Charter Commission will identify public agencies with involvement along the corridor and determine how to engage them and their optimum role for long-term success of the byway, including:

- CDOT
- Town/County governments in all three (3) counties – once the byway nomination is approved, inform and engage
- USFS
- Colorado and NM State Park officials
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe leadership
- Jicarilla Apache Nation leadership
- Business Improvement Districts
- Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO)
- FLC & Southwest Center
- Coordinate with Tour Colorado

3. Public Involvement Process

Outreach to and engagement by the general public is an important aspect of all byway efforts. The following is an initial plan to engage the public in final planning and in activating the byway once official designation is gained.

a. Partner Meetings

- A consistent series of well-managed and well attended Partner Meetings are necessary in order to strengthen the composition and structure of the TABB Commission. Project files must contain meeting notes, sign in sheets and other documentation of outreach and development efforts.
- Agenda development should focus on SMART goals: Specific/Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant/Results Oriented and Time-specific.
- The Mission statement and Vision Statement refinement, Goals, Objectives and Action Items will be more meaningful when developed collaboratively by the entire group.
- Action items will identify financial needs and sources of available support in the context of the annual byway budget established by the TABB Commission.
- Require / ask commission members to commit to four meetings per year – schedule a year in advance.

b. Open Meetings

- Involvement of and affirmation from the general public is an essential aspect of securing broad support, obtaining funding and determining concerns from property owners, byway partners and the traveling public.
- Well-advertised open public meetings are critical during the development of a completed management plan is undertaken.
- By openly encouraging regular input from the citizens of La Plata and Archuleta County (and Rio Arriba in New Mexico) all aspects of the byway will thrive in the future.
- The TABB Commission fully expects to tap into the wide knowledge and expertise base of the citizens – information which will be incorporated into the plan and future processes to advance byway operations.
- Open public involvement encourages and secures a feeling of ownership, and inspires ongoing sustainability.
- (Note: LaPlata County prefers one open meeting or one at the north end – we have great spaces for such a meeting both in Durango and Ignacio and would want to serve food, etc. to encourage participation. Perhaps this could be almost something like a Byways launch party once the map and initial brochure and website have been developed. This would engage locals in participation, help with future funding, phases of improvements, develop a “Friends of the Byway”)

4. Interpretive Markers and Potential Improvements

The byway route map will be utilized to identify where interpretative signs, roadside kiosks, pullouts, etc. should be located. The Charter Commission will work to determine who should be involved to create, build, install and maintain signage. Advantageous side trips to reach heritage sites will be included where these make sense. The following are prioritized first steps:

- a. Education and Interpretation Plan
 - Short video in visitor's centers and on web site/YouTube/Facebook
- a. Interpretive Markers
 - Navajo Lake State Park
 - Add interpretive markers for pullouts in Pagosa Junction for the Iglesia de San Juan church
- b. Visitor Facilities
 - Navajo Lake State Park
 - Town of Arboles
 - Town of Pagosa Springs (side trip from route and an excellent additional point of access)
 - SUIT Cultural Center
 - Sky Ute Casino
 - Durango Visitor Center
 - Durango Welcome Center
 - Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge RR depot and museum
 - Animas Museum
 - Dulce, NM
 - Village of Chama, NM
 - Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR depot and gift shop
- c. Pullouts
 - Iglesia de San Juan, Church in Pagosa Junction
 - Along the boundary of Navajo State Park
 - Juanita Cemetery (possibility)
 - Trujillo Cemetery (possibility)
- d. Detours
 - Travel in inclement weather or during severe weather conditions is not advised for the small central section of the byway south of Pagosa Junction/Juanita. A convenient detour over a well-maintained county road from Pagosa Junction is north on Trujillo Road (CR 500) to Pagosa Springs, continuing east on Hwy 160 to Hwy 84 then south to Dulce or Chama.
 - Those without high-clearance 4WD are recommended, coming from Arboles to Pagosa Junction, to continue North on Trujillo Road (CR 500) to Pagosa Springs then east on Hwy 160 to Hwy 84 then South to Dulce or Chama.
 - Pagosa Springs has lodging, restaurants and many other activities year-round. See the event calendar at the Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce.

- e. Publications
 - Map
 - Self-tour guide noting the importance of historic preservation and respect for historical sites and tribal lands
 - Rack cards for visitor's centers/Chambers
 - QR code system
 - Radio spots with signage along route
 - Social media
 - Eventual book

- f. Prioritize markers in to two or three tiers of production and placement. Begin by placing top priority markers with a consistent plan to increase each year until desired number are installed and maintained.

5. Promotional and Marketing Activities

Charter Commission members in each county will be identifying opportunities within the first 12-24 months (and onward) to promote and market the byway. These activities are often a first point-of-contact for volunteers, are often highly visible and should lend themselves to community partnerships and use of interns. A variety of seasonal activities already exist in communities along the byway. Still other opportunities exist to create a signature promotional event with local character, possibly linking with the San Juan Skyway, Trail of the Ancients and/or the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byways. Future plans intend to tap into the many attractions found along this byway and build upon lesser known storylines, resources and assets. Regional events for promotion and marketing include:

- Chimney Rock – monthly full moon programs, night sky programs, visions of Chimney Rock, solstice and equinox programs, Life at Chimney Rock Festival, Puebloan Pottery Workshop, Native American Cultural Gathering see 2014 calendar <http://www.chimneyrockco.org/calendar.php> see full info at <http://www.chimneyrockco.org/index.htm>
 - Navajo Lake activities and events - <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/Navajo>
 - Four Corners Motorcycle Rally
 - Pagosa Springs events – PS Chamber site
 - Folkwest – Four Corners Folk Festival (early September) and the Pagosa Folk 'n' Bluegrass Festival (early June)
 - Southern Ute Indian Tribe events (many, including special events at the Southern Ute Cultural Center)
 - Durango & Silverton RR and Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway events
- Additional LaPlata County historic features, points of interest, attractions, side trips, etc. include:
- 100 Properties selected for historic preservation are scattered around the county – many are along this route. The study can be accessed from the La Plata County website / historic preservation/ 100 properties Study...also available through the Animas Museum
 - Town of Tiffany (Hispano Culture)
 - multiple cemeteries just off route – some very historic – include historic context for cemetery

- Fox Fire Winery side trip – tasting room open daily, features impromptu tours of restored historic schoolhouse located on a County-designated historic site
- Arborglyphs side trip located off US 160 near La Plata / Archuleta county line. Book already published about Arborglyphs project (Hispano Culture)
- Downtown Ignacio – tri cultural community
- Cultural Center & Museum
- Sky Ute Casino
- Florida RR bridge – short side trip on original route
- Town of Falga site – on original route
- Point of interest area near Walmart – coal seam, Dominguez / Escalante Expedition & Santa Fe Trail – original RR grade is very visible along this corridor
- Nighthorse Recreation Area...once it is open....ahem
- Visitor Center
- Downtown Durango
- Welcome Center
- Animas River, river trail & many parks along route
- Train Station & Museum
- Discovery Museum (Powerhouse)– downtown side trip
- Animas Museum – short side trip
- Southwest Center & FLC – short side trip
- Points North – several hot springs locations, DMR, Silverton, Ouray
- Points West – Mancos & Mesa Verde, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park
- Points South – Aztec & Salmon Ruins, Chaco, Navajo Nation, Hispano Culture / Settlement Areas

6. Financial Resources

Researching, securing, acknowledging and managing ample financial resources that will be necessary to accomplish the mission of the local byway commission will require innovative thinking and relationship building. Because federal funding is no longer available from the National Byways Program as of 2014, other opportunities including corporate and small business sponsorships, community grants, gifts, and in-kind contributions shall be explored. This will be essential, ongoing work of the TABB Commission, requiring the development and adherence to an annual budget.

Signage budget and funding: Determining the total budget for this aspect of the program has been identified by the TABB Charter Commission as one of their top priorities upon designation of the byway. Working with approved fabricators and CDOT officials the TABB Charter Commission has plans to estimate the cost of signs, referencing previous installations in the state, verifying budgets for new and replacement signs, sign posts and labor. Consideration shall be given to signage for traffic safety, directional aids, way-finding and interpretation. Funds to purchase and place the (now famous) Colorado Columbine Scenic and Historic Byway signs will be raised from businesses, organizations and individuals along the byway, including those noted above.

Funding sources are numerous and should be continually sought.

- a. Grants
 - History Colorado (State Historical Fund)
 - GOCO
 - Private foundation grants for resource development (Determine best practice for either partnering with a 501(c)3 nonprofit fiscal agent or establishing a separate nonprofit corporation to hold charitable donations and provide required documentation for IRS tax purposes.)
 - b. County
 - Archuleta and LaPlata Counties
 - Archuleta and LaPlata County Tourism Commission
 - LPEA (LaPlata County Electric Association)
 - c. Tribes
 - Possible modest funding specific to marketing their own cultural and natural resources located on or near the byway
 - d. Business and Corporate
 - Durango/Silverton Railroad (lead anchor business, connected thematically)
 - Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR (lead anchor business, connected thematically)
 - Casinos – Apache Nugget, Wild Horse Casino and Sky Ute Casino
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - e. State and other Local
 - Determine if Colorado Enterprise Zone Tax Credits be utilized for private investment
 - TIF funding (Tax Increment Financing)
 - City of Durango
 - Durango Area Tourism (DADO)
 - Durango Mountain Resort Locals Benefit Days
 - La Plata County Historical Society
 - Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge RR
 - Seek smaller grants with charitable organizations (e.g., Rotary)
 - f. Donations and In-Kind Matches
 - Determine best practice for either partnering with a 501(c)3 nonprofit fiscal agent or establishing a separate nonprofit corporation to hold charitable donations and provide required documentation for IRS tax purposes. ###
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“The strengths of this nomination are its scenic qualities that are geographic and spatial and its history that is rooted in the time depth of the occupation and development of the area. The arguments for the spatial connectivity are well presented with the information about the railroad and its linkage from Chama to Durango. The sense of timelessness as one travels through the area also is a strong quality for the scenic aspects of the nomination.”

Ruth Lambert, Author and Cultural Specialist, San Juan Mountains Association