

Currier and Ives Scenic and Cultural Byway Informational and Kick-Off Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2009
Henniker Community Center, Henniker, NH

Meeting Notes

What is special about the Currier and Ives Trail? What is its “story”?

- Route 127 through Webster represents history preserved in time:
 - o Blackwater River is scenic and recreational
 - o Beautiful farmland
 - o Historic homes and barns
 - o Very few commercial enterprises; the whole town is residential/agricultural

- Henniker: Route 202/9 limited access highway has few redeeming qualities – you need to turn off onto Old Concord Rd. and Western Ave., which have many historic and scenic sites
 - o Old Concord Rd. after junction of Rt. 127 has only heavy commercial area in town – not scenic

- Many old cemeteries along the By way

- Alternate routes in Hopkinton too offer scenic/historic sites

- Route 202/9 can also be considered scenic; bicyclists use the route because of its wide shoulders

- Old Concord Rd. into Henniker has many early 19th century homes and buildings

- Contoocook River west of Henniker is a very scenic part of the river
 - o Kayakers and fishermen highly value that section of the river

- Lack of pull-offs on the By way for scenic enjoyment
 - o Would be a real draw for plein-air artists

- Limited shoulder width along much of the By way route
 - o Opportunity to improve for recreation/enjoyment
 - o Safety for road users is also important

- “Death Alley” from Hillsborough town line to I-89 along Rt. 202/9 has had frequent vehicle accidents and needs safety improvements

- Name “Currier and Ives Trail” not necessarily significant – could potentially come up with a more descriptive name
- Covered bridges along or near the Byway
- Many recreational opportunities
 - Biking
 - Two rivers, Blackwater and Contoocook: canoeing/kayaking, fishing
- Cultural features:
 - “concerts on the green” in Henniker
 - Farmers’ markets
 - Museums
 - Old Home Day
 - Hopkinton Fairgrounds
 - Dams (cultural/historic stories)
- Mills and industrial history tell a story about the towns
 - Where are they now (ruins)? Need maps
 - Access to historic sites may be an issue if they are on private land
- Historic anchors on either end of the Byway: Daniel Webster birthplace and Franklin Pierce homestead

Questions to Investigate about the Byway:

- Can we/should we change the route in Henniker to reflect the path of Old Route 9 rather than the 202/9 bypass?
- Should the route be extended on either end to reach the Daniel Webster birthplace in Franklin and the Franklin Pierce homestead in Hillsborough? Or should those sites be included as key points close to the Byway?
- How much can the towns expect traffic to increase along the Byway as a result of tourism promotion?
 - When would peak traffic be during the year?
- Should we think about renaming the Byway to something other than the Currier and Ives Trail?
- Does Scenic Byway designation affect property values for homes/businesses along the route?
- What are upcoming projects on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and could we coordinate Byway improvements with any road improvement

projects already planned?

- Who would manage project work for road improvements?
- Where are canoe/kayak access points along the rivers?

Next Steps:

- Review Byway inventory
 - o Draft inventory will be posted on www.cnhrpc.org
 - o Make comments or corrections online
 - o Add new items to inventory
 - o Photos can be emailed to Vanessa Bittermann at vbittermann@cnhrpc.org
- Data collection
 - o Traffic and safety data
 - o Property valuation data
 - o Expected traffic increase
- Resolve Henniker route
- Decide on route extensions
- Next meeting: will be held in mid-September