

Project Summary 2002

FHWA National Scenic Byways Program

All sections must be completed on an electronic form at <http://www.byways.org>
Applications must be submitted online and on paper.

State Submission Date <i>not submitted yet</i>	Division Submission Date <i>not submitted yet</i>
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Project Info

Project Name Chuckanut Guardrails: Scenery and Safety	Project No.
	Applicant's Reference No. 4
Project Year 2002	
Counties and/or Regions Involved Samish Farmlands and Chuckanut Mountainside, Skagit and Whatcom Counties	
Location of Project along Byway(s) View Points from Samish Bay to Larrabee State Park	
Federal Lands Crossed by Involved Byway(s)	

Associated Byways

State	Byway Name	Details	
WA	WA-Chuckanut Drive (State Route 11)	Designation Date 1993	Intrinsic Qualities* H,N,R,S
		Byway Organization Friends of Chuckanut Drive 585 Pleasant Bay Road Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: (360) 734-3771 Fax: (360)738-6232 E-mail: ellen@wccog.org	

*IQ codes: A - Archaeological, C - Cultural, H - Historical, N - Natural, R - Recreational, S - Scenic

Project Category

Project Type

Project along a State-designated scenic byway that is carried out to make the byway eligible for designation as an All-American Road or a National Scenic Byway.

Is the project consistent with the Corridor Management Plan for the byway(s)?

Yes

Project Category (Continued)

Eligibility Category

Resource Protection

Is this application a copy of a previously submitted application or a revision of a prior non-funded application?

Yes

Ready-to-Go

The Washington State Department of Transportation has completed all necessary environmental approvals and has had a design and construction plan ready for bidding and implementation as of March, 2000, for installation of guard rails and bridge rails meeting updated State highway standards. In cooperation with the Chuckanut Drive Corridor Management Planning Community and in coordination with the Department's on-going Roadway Elements Design Team and its applicable report, the Department has agreed to postpone implementation of its guardrail upgrade project pending approval of these grant funds. The Department values the opportunity to work with Community members to achieve a lasting and valuable plan whose design reflects community needs. Budget amounts for this construction work have been secured and will be reserved for use in conjunction with this Scenic Byways funding.

Prior Projects

FHWA Proj No.	Year	Project Name	Amount	Status
SB-1998-WA-11	1998	Corridor Management Plan	\$27,360	Completed
	Project Coordinator: Ellen Barton			

Project Abstract

Chuckanut Drive's winding corners and sheer cliffs make it one of the State's most picturesque drives, and one of the most challenging for safety design. In this project, the corridor community will work with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff to apply context sensitive design to the safety improvements and vegetation management of the drive. Key focus areas of the project will include selection and installation of esthetically appropriate guardrails, vegetation maintenance guidelines to protect against mudslide danger, scenic view and tree protection in the right-of-way, and other measures which preserve both the scenic quality and safety of Chuckanut.

Project Narrative

Scenic beauty draws visitors to Chuckanut Drive by the thousands every year, and protecting scenic beauty is the top priority for the Chuckanut corridor community. Meanwhile, these same attractive qualities – the tight curves, the sheer rock cliffs, the forested mountainside – create potential danger areas. In order to protect both natural beauty and safety, the byway community will develop standards for three specific elements within the right-of-way:

1. Guardrail and bridge-rail materials selection

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has identified several sites for proposed guardrail and bridge rail modifications to meet current state highway standards. This project will enable to the Chuckanut corridor community (CCC) to work with the WSDOT to preserve the scenic and historic byway appearance while meeting safety needs.

Project Narrative (Continued)

2. Mudslide prevention through forest health

Removal of trees and vegetation upland from the roadway results in soil destabilization and greatly increases the risk of mudslide damage. Older trees growing within the right-of-way provide irreplaceable protection from the dangers of mudslides. However, trees in the state-owned right-of-way are threatened on two fronts: illegal removal and disease. Large trees have been cut down without authorization on public land. In addition, mechanical pruning equipment shatters tree-limbs, increasing susceptibility to disease. This project will create standards for enforcement of vegetation maintenance to protect forest scenery and mudslide safety.

3. Preserving views by planned tree and vegetation maintenance

Spectacular island views across the sound are framed by tall trees growing downhill along the steep coastal slope. Older trees whose branches are high above the byway enhance the view with a pleasing arch-like effect. Younger trees and low vegetation may grow to block views in some areas unless a management plan is formulated. This project will identify key view corridors and management strategies which will maintain views but allow for growing trees in appropriate areas.

The CCC will work with the WSDOT to review the safety standards and vegetation management methods currently applicable for state highways. We are already working together to determine whether roadway capacity, speed, and vehicle size restrictions along SR11 create special criteria for guardrails and bridge rail strength. We have selected context sensitive guard rail materials and alternatives for upgrade areas and WSDOT is in the process of crash testing new materials for potential use. WSDOT engineering staff are coordinating with WSDOT scenic byways experts. This project has already begun to facilitate intra-departmental communication and education as well as increased public interaction for the WSDOT and the CCC.

PROTECTING TREES, AND VIEWS FROM MUDSLIDES

Members of the byway will inventory scenic view sites and potential mudslide sites which would benefit from improved vegetation management. Working with WSDOT maintenance staff, the byway group will develop and implement an effective and esthetic management plan for vegetation within the state-owned right of way. Optional, voluntary recommendations for vegetation management on privately owned forested lands contiguous to the byway will be included in the plan, for those property owners interested.

BENEFITS TO TRAVELERS

Improved vegetation management and esthetically appropriate guardrails will benefit travelers and residents of the byway through a reduction in collisions, fewer road closures due to roadway instability, and an enhanced sense of safety. In the past decade, periodic road closures along Chuckanut Drive due to soil or landslide dangers have occurred almost annually. Long term benefits to travelers along the byway will be the assurance that views enjoyed now will be available for enjoyment again in the coming decades. Commercial establishments rely heavily on view window seating, but they rely even more on the access to their markets which the road allows, when it is open and safe. The multi-faceted approach which this project allows for addressing the many inter-related roadside elements for design and safety makes this a particularly important one for the Chuckanut Merchants. Less tangible but equally beneficial will be the improved communication and working relationship between byway group members and the various departments of the Washington State Department of Transportation.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Chuckanut Drive has long been recognized as one of the outstanding recreational and scenic drives in Washington State. Historically, the unique beauty of the highway and the surrounding landscape have been enhanced by roadside management practices including trimming trees and brush in the right-of-

Project Narrative (Continued)

way.

A Vegetation Management Plan would:

- Establish partnerships with corridor landowners;
- Conserve vegetation through land use strategies while respecting private property;
- Protect sensitive areas and maintain view corridors and lookouts;
- Integrate current DOT practices into long-term management strategies;
- Enhance and restore natural vegetation and wildlife habitats;
- Maintain traveler safety while providing scenic and cultural preservation and enhancement.

A Vegetation Management Planning process would include the following tasks:

- 1 - Understand existing federal, state and local policies, plans and programs (Federal Highway Administration, Washington State Department of Transportation Roadside Classification Plan and maintenance program, Growth Management Act issues, etc.)
- 2 – Determine Roadside Management Zones (from Washington State Department of Transportation) and their goals and objectives.
- 3 – Establish view corridors or locations to screen incongruent land uses
- 4 – Locate utilities and determine clearance requirements
- 5 – Meet with Washington State Department of Transportation representatives and adjacent land owners to determine their issues, problems and priorities.
- 6 – Determine management strategies for the corridor

The Vegetation Management Planning process will be developed in conjunction with other WSDOT planning and design activities along the highway right-of-way.

Work Plan

Line Item	Task/Milestone Description	Start Date/ Duration	Work Category
001	Build on CMP Design Recommendation	01 Feb 2004 6 months	Resource Protection
Responsible Party: Laura Leigh Brakke, Friends of Chuckanut			
Justification: Build on the recommendations in the CMP by working with CCC members to develop strategies for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Context sensitive design standards for historic structures, guardrails, and bridges · Conserving vegetation while respecting private property · Protecting sensitive areas and maintaining view corridors and lookouts · Establishing locations to screen incongruent land uses · Enhancing and restoring natural vegetation and wildlife habitats 			
002	Context Sensitive Design Concurrence	01 Mar 2002 6 months	Resource Protection
Responsible Party: Ellen Barton, Whatcom County Council of Governme			
Justification: Work with the WSDOT Roadside Design Team to determine appropriate and/or innovative strategies for development of context sensitive roadside design and safety guidelines. Research will include the WSDOT Roadside Design Manual. Additional research will include referencing the Federal “Context Sensitive Design” standards and resources developed and			

Work Plan (Continued)

002	published in 1999. The goal for this task includes: - Maintain traveler safety while providing scenic and cultural preservation		
003	Agency Policy coordination	01 Mar 2002 2 months	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Polly Brooks, Washington State Department of Tra		
	Justification: Work with appropriate federal, state and local agencies for policy coordination and concurrence on design and safety guidelines and engineering requirements. Locate utilities and determine clearance requirements.		
004	Assess site-specific strength requirements	15 Mar 2002 3 Months	Safety Improvements
	Responsible Party: Polly Brooks, WSDOT		
	Justification: Assess strength and materials requirements based on site-specific characteristics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Speed limitations · Vehicle weight restrictions · Roadway design and age Select materials for final design and installation of guardrail and bridge rail sections.		
005	Vegetation Review	01 Apr 2002 5 months	Resource Protection
	Responsible Party: Al Hanners, Washington Native Plant Society		
	Justification: The Washington Native Plant Society will work with a qualified landscape architect to conduct a detailed survey of vegetation management benefit areas. Specific attention will be paid to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · unstable slopes where trees provide or protection from mudslides · Trees close to the byway subject to mechanical pruning damage · maintenance strategies On the coastal side of the byway, older trees will be identified for preservation and a pruning or thinning plan will give direction for methods to maintain view channels through the trees. Maintenance staff responsible for trees within the right of way will meet with the byway community to develop and refine the plan.		
006	Construction and Installation of Guardrail upgrades	01 Oct 2002 6 months	Facilities: Shoulders
	Responsible Party: Polly Brooks, WSDOT		
	Justification: Funds from this scenic byways grant will be used to augment existing WSDOT funds for guardrail upgrade and installation. This budget item is based on estimates of conventional materials cost compared to the cost of context sensitive design materials recommended by the CCC. Work will occur within state-owned right-of-way.		

Budget

Line Item	Description	Total Cost	Request Amt.
001	Build on CMP Design Recommendation	\$1,370	\$720
002	Context Sensitive Design Concurrence	\$4,230	\$3,840
003	Agency Policy coordination	\$1,470	\$940
004	Assess site-specific strength requirements	\$3,525	\$2,640
005	Vegetation Review	\$17,940	\$14,400
006	Construction and installation of guardrail upgrades	\$900,000	\$350,000
Totals		\$928,535	\$372,540

Match amount (total cost - requested amount) is \$555,995 or 59.9% of total.
 Match accounted for in Match Breakdown is \$555,995 or 59.9% of total.
 These two amounts must be equal for the Budget and Match sections to be complete.

For your information, 80% of Total Cost is \$742,828, and 20% of Total Cost is \$185,707.
 Your match amount cannot be less than 20% of Total Cost.

Match Breakdown

Source	Description	Type	Value
Chuckanut Merchants Association	Volunteer hours approximately 6 meetings @ 12.50/hr per volunteer	Non-Govt. Services	\$720
Washington State Department of Transportation	Project funds secured for guardrail construction	Cash	\$553,835
Friends of Chuckanut	Volunteer labor for approximately 6 meetings @ 12.50/volunteer	Non-Govt. Services	\$720
Washington Native Plant Society	Volunteer labor for approximately 6 site review meetings	Non-Govt. Services	\$720
Total			\$555,995

Total from items above: \$555,995 or 59.9% of total.
 Match amount from Budget: \$555,995 or 59.9% of total.
 These two amounts must be equal for the Budget and Match sections to be complete.

For your information, 80% of Total Cost is \$742,828, and 20% of Total Cost is \$185,707.
 Your match amount cannot be less than 20% of Total Cost.

Project Coordinator

Coordinator Name Ellen Barton		
Agency/Group Whatcom County Council of Governments	Title Transportation Projects Specialist	
E-mail Address ellen@wcog.org		
Phone 360 676 6974	Fax 360 738 6232	
Street Address 314 East Champion Street		
City Bellingham	State WA	ZIP 98225

State Program

State WA	Byway Program Start Date 01 Jan 1967	
Scenic Byway Agency Washington State Dept. of Transportation-Heritage Corridors Pgm.		
State Scenic Byways Coordinator Judy Lorenzo		
E-mail Address lorenzj@wsdot.wa.gov		
Phone 360-705-7274	Fax 360-705-6839	
Street Address P.O. Box 47393 310 Maple Park Drive		
City Olympia	State WA	ZIP 98504-7393

Signatures

State Scenic Byways Agency

Judy Lorenzo
Heritage Corridors Program

Date

Matching Funds Certification

Judy Lorenzo
Heritage Corridors Program

Date

Congressional Members

Associated States

State	Senators
WA	Cantwell, Maria Murray, Patty

State Representatives

State	District	Representative
WA	2	Larsen, Rick

Attachments

- Letter of Support: Whatcom County Historical Society
- Letter of Support: Washington State Department of Transportation
- Letter of Support: Chuckanut Merchants Association
- Area and potential project site map
- Copies from relevant pages of Draft Corridor Plan
- Historic Photographs of bridge and rail design elements
- Historic Photographs of Vegetation changes
- Letter of Support: Senator Maria Cantwell
- Letter of Support: Representative Rick Larsen
- Letter of Support: Senator Patty Murray