

GLACIER VISITOR CENTER
(Phase 1)

PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. PROJECT ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to begin development of a Mt. Baker Highway interpretive visitor center in the town of Glacier. The need for such a facility along the Mt. Baker corridor is detailed in the Mt. Baker Highway Corridor Management Plan – Visitor Experience Plan. This project (Phase 1) covers facility design and site assessment for the center and preliminary engineering, environmental review, and installation of the restrooms.

2. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- A.** Mt. Baker Highway (SR 542) is designated by the State of Washington as a State Scenic and Recreational (S&R) Highway. The section from milepost 7.7 to milepost 57.2 was designated in 1967, and the section from milepost 0.0 to 7.7 was added in 1993. The last 24 miles of the highway are also designated a National Forest Scenic Byway (1989). The Mt. Baker Highway possesses 5 of the six possible intrinsic qualities: scenic, cultural, historical, recreational, and natural. These qualities are identified and described in the Mt. Baker Highway Corridor Management Plan developed in 1997 by the Whatcom County Council of Governments.

- B.** Mt. Baker Highway originates near sea level at Interstate 5 in the City of Bellingham and travels east to its terminus at Artist Point, elevation 5,200 feet (see project location maps). The first 4 miles travel through Bellingham and its surrounding suburban area. The next 39 miles climb gradually while following the Nooksack River Valley. This section is dominated by farms, small timber and recreational communities, and privately owned forestland. The last 24 miles of the highway is in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

In 1996, a Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan was completed for SR 542 using a National Scenic Byways Program grant. This application is partially the result of information gathered during preparation of that plan.

The town of Glacier is located approximately half-way up the highway. Glacier is the last town before entering the national forest and ascending the mountain. It is also the first place bus loads of tourists and recreation enthusiasts stop on the way down the mountain. The Mount Baker is unique in that the eastern terminus of the route is a recreation area. The highway goes no further. Travelers count the resources available to them as part of their visitor experience. Currently, there are

no interpretive facilities, and there are no public restrooms. This project seeks to begin the process of correcting those deficiencies.

- C. Mt. Baker Highway is located in Whatcom County, in the northwest corner of Washington State (see project location map). The project is located approximately in the center of the route serving intense recreational demand associated with Mount Baker and its large ski area. This project will involve local jurisdiction representatives, agencies, and private citizens through a public participation process. Participants in this project will include business and residential interests of the Glacier community, Mt. Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce, Whatcom County Council of Governments, Washington State Department of Transportation, and the Whatcom County Parks Department.

The project consists of site assessment, facility design, preliminary engineering, environmental review, and restroom installation. Those steps will allow ample opportunities for any interested parties to participate in decision-making processes associated with this project.

All the partners in this project will gain appreciably from completion of a visitor center. The state will have shared in the provision of reasonable access to a comfortable stopping place contributing to driver safety, the overall visitor experience, and with addition of public restroom facilities, public health. The public will benefit in that adequate restrooms will be available twenty-four hours per day in a convenient location where information on the corridor is available. Whatcom County will benefit from this project in that it is a low cost project serving the public with much needed information amenities, as well as eliminating potential public health problems associated with limited public rest room access.

3. WORK PLAN & TIME TABLE

MT. BAKER HIGHWAY - Glacier Visitor Center (Phase 1)

4/30/98 GRANT OBLIGATION

MONTH NO.	May-98 1	Jun-98 2	Jul-98 3	Aug-98 4	Sep-98 5	Oct-98 6	Nov-98 7	Dec-98 8	Jan-99 9	Feb-99 10	Mar-99 11	Apr-99 12
	PROJECT PARTICIPANT MEETING - WCCOG Lead											
	FORM DESIGN TEAM - WCCOG Lead											
	FACILITY DESIGN - WCCOG Lead											
	SITE ASSESSMENT & SELECTION											
	ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW - Consultant Lead											
	PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING & SITE PREPARATION - WCCOG Lead											
	ACQUISITION & INSTALLATION - WCCOG Lead											

4. PROJECTED BUDGET SUMMARY

GLACIER VISITOR CENTER (Phase 1)	Total Project Cost (100%)	Federal Share (80%)	Local Share (20%)
Administration (Bookkeeping, billing, phones, photocopies & postage)	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,040	260
Facility Design & Site Assessment (Team formation & 4-6 meetings)	3,500	2,800	700
Environmental Review (Consultant)	7,100	5,680	1,420
Preliminary Engineering & Site Preparation (Restrooms only)	4,000	3,200	800
Restroom Acquisition & Installation	20,600	16,480	4,120
Project Total	\$ 36,500	\$ 29,200	\$ 7,300

Glacier Visitor Center (Phase 1)

Letters of Support

The following organizations have indicated a willingness to submit letters of support:

1. Whatcom County Parks Department
2. Mt. Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce
3. Glacier businesses

Glacier Visitor Center (Phase 1)

Clarification Items

1. Project site - The property on which the facility will be located has been selected. Whatcom County owns property in the town of glacier and has agreed to make it available for the Glacier Visitor Center. This property is identified on the attached project site map. The county's commitment for use of the property is included in their letter of support.
2. Facility Maintenance - Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Department has agreed to contribute to the long-term maintenance of the restrooms.
3. Restrooms – The restroom facility being considered for the project is depicted in the attached graphic. The facility is a permanent structure, placed on a concrete slab, with two holding tanks, and is completely ADA accessible.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Scenic Byways Program

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE – All sections must be complete.

Section A. - Program Requirements: (Attachment A: Verification of Scenic Byway Program Authorization)

State: WASHINGTON	Start Date of State Scenic Byway Program: 1967	
Scenic Byway Agency: WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE CORRIDORS PROGRAM		
State Scenic Byways Coordinator: JUDY LORENZO BRANCH MANAGER	E-Mail: lorenzoj@wsdot.wa.gov	
Phone: (360) 705-7274	FAX: (360) 705-6839	
Street: 310 MAPLE PARK LANE; TRANSPORTATION BUILDING PO BOX 47393		Room #: SLA 9
City: OLYMPIA	State: WA	Zip Code: 98504-7393

Section B. - Grant Applicant Signature (State Scenic Byways Agency)

Name:	Title:
Signature:	Date:

Section C. - Project Name and Location: (Attachment B: Verification of Byway Designation Dates)

Project Name: MT BAKER HIGHWAY – GLACIER VISITOR CENTER (Phase 1)	Project Number:
Scenic Byway(s) Name & Route #: MOUNT BAKER HIGHWAY – STATE ROUTE 542	Date of State Byway Designation: 1967
Project Location: County(s) & Region in State (include maps) WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON	U.S. Congressional District(s) - Name & Number: 2nd
Byway Designated because of the following Quality (Check all that apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scenic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural	

Section D. - Project Abstract: (Brief Project Description: Maximum 5 Sentences)

<p>The purpose of this project is to begin development of a Mt. Baker Highway interpretive visitor center in the town of Glacier. The need for such a facility along the Mt. Baker corridor is detailed in the Mt. Baker Highway Corridor Management Plan – Visitor Experience Plan. This project (Phase 1) covers facility design and site assessment for the center and preliminary engineering, environmental review, and installation of the restrooms.</p>

Section E. - Project Coordinator: *(Person/agency managing project)*

Coordinator Name: GORDON ROGERS PLANNING DIRECTOR		E-Mail: : wccog@az.com
Agency/ Group: WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS		
Phone: (360) 676-6974		FAX: (360) 738-6232
Street: 2011 YOUNG STREET		
City: BELLINGHAM		State: WA
		Room #: 98225

Section F. - Project Priority: *Check all that apply*

<input type="checkbox"/> Projects associated with developing corridor management plans.	<input type="checkbox"/> The State Program serves as model for other States.
<input type="checkbox"/> Projects involving the planning, design, and development of a State scenic byways program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects along a multi-State corridors where the States submit a joint application.

Section G. - Project Type: *Check one only.*

<i>Construction Projects *</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan, Design, and Develop a State Scenic Byway Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder Improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Protect Historical and Cultural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian and Bicyclists Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Highway Improvements to Enhance Access to Recreation Area
<input type="checkbox"/> Passing Lanes <input type="checkbox"/> Rest Areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop Tourist Information
<input type="checkbox"/> Turn-outs <input type="checkbox"/> Overlooks	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Improvements
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interpretative Facilities	

** Attach Construction Plans & Status of Environmental Review Process*

Section H. - Project Funding Breakdown

Total Project Amount:		Federal Share (80% maximum):		State Share (20% minimum - including third-party donations):	
\$ 36,500	100 %	\$ 29,200	80 %	\$ 7,300	20 %

Section I. - FHWA Division Recommendations

(If "no" or "partial" recommendation, please use comment section or attach explanation)

Project Meets Scenic Byways Grant Requirements	Yes	No	
Funding Recommendation:	Total Funding \$	Partial Funding \$	No Funding
<i>Comments: (Attach separate sheet if necessary)</i>			
Name:	Title:		
Signature:	Date:		

Section J. - Approval (For FHWA Headquarters Use)

MP/\$	P/\$	Q/\$	NQ/\$
Total Approved: \$	Federal Share \$	State Share \$	
Comments: <i>(attach separate sheet if necessary)</i>			
Name:		Title:	
Signature:		Date:	