

**Corridor X Task Force
May 1, 2003
Meeting Minutes**

Chairperson Mary Buckelew of Jefferson County opened the meeting and introduced her fellow Chairpersons, including Bob Forbus of Walker County and Shelby Howe, representing Steve Foshee of Marion County. Ms. Buckelew welcomed everyone in attendance.

Following the self introductions, Ms. Buckelew requested approval of the minutes. Barry Copeland motioned to approve, Griffin Lassiter seconded, all voted in favor and the minutes were approved.

Scenic Byways

Ms. Buckelew introduced Joe Watts with the Alabama Scenic Byways Committee who was invited to speak on the Scenic Byway opportunity for Corridor X. Mr. Watts explained that the State Legislature established a committee in 2000 to identify and designate scenic byways in Alabama. For designation to occur, three primary steps must be taken. First, the committee must develop an inventory of potential roadways, develop a corridor management plan and pursue designation for specific roadways. Roadways that are most likely to receive designation tell a story or the history of the region, or highlight the economic development of the region. In order to preserve the scenic aspects of the byway, billboards are not allowed along the designated portion of the roadway.

Several meeting attendees had questions about the program. Mr. Ostaseski asked about the capacity impacts of a designation. Mr. Watts explained that the program carries no regulatory power; it simply offers guidelines maintaining the scenic corridor. Ms. Buckelew asked if scenic byway designation would prevent interstate designation. Mr. Watts said no and cited an example of an Interstate in Oregon along the Columbia River. Ms. Buckelew noted that designation could be used as a marketing tool. Bill Matthews asked if it was possible for a designated corridor to become de-designated. Mr. Watts explained that de-designation is not specifically outlined, but if a corridor neglected to submit the required annual progress reports or had a strong history of allowing billboards or other activities that significantly detract from the scenic aspects of the corridor then de-designation may be considered. Kay Argo asked about the bureaucratic process. Mr. Watts explained that the Alabama committee favors a grassroots movement where citizens in the state have a strong say in the identification of potential scenic byways as opposed to state bureaucrats controlling the identification process. A public hearing/public comment period is held for any corridor being considered for designation.

Mr. Ostaseski noted that should the Task Force advocate for designation, the scenic byway corridor management plan could be developed based on the current Management and Development Plan for Corridor X. Ms. Buckelew recommended a committee review the scenic byway program and develop pros and cons of pursuing designation for the Corridor. The Billboards Committee was given this task. The committee's name was changed to the Scenic Byways Committee to better reflect what the Task Force is trying to achieve regarding management and development of Corridor X. Griffin Lassiter will Chair the committee.

RPCGB will prepare a pros and cons list prior to the meeting of the Scenic Byways subcommittee.

Development Subcommittee

Mr. Ostaseski requested the industry representatives on the Task Force provide input on the short-range development plans of their jurisdictions. This information will greatly enhance the University of Alabama's economic analysis of the corridor. A committee meeting was set for May 12, 2002 in Jasper.

Appalachian Regional Commission Actions

Mr. Ostaseski reported that the ARC has agreed to cover the cost of the production and compilation digital ortho photos. Alabama Power is preparing a price on parcel data, which will be presented to the ARC for possible payment. The ARC will contract with ALDOT and Marshall University to produce the data. Once this data is available for this effort, it will be made available to the public at large.

ALDOT Letter

At the April meeting, the Task Force requested a letter to ALDOT requesting the postponement of billboard permits for a period of one year from April 1, 2003. Both the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments and the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham sent the letter on April 21, 2003.

Other

Gwaltney McCollum reported on HB 457 to establish a Corridor X Parkway Authority. The Walker County Commission generally supports the bill, but isn't pleased with the language that requires the Commission to cover administrative expenses. The bill recently had its first reading.

The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for **Thursday, June 5 at 2:00 p.m. in Jasper at the Community Health Systems Inc.**, 204 19th Street East, Jasper, AL 35501

Attendees at the May 1, 2003 Meeting

Kay Argo	Birmingham Regional Planning Commission
Randy Braden	ALDOT
Mary Buckelew	Jefferson County
Pam Collins	Alabama Power
Dennis Cooper	Citizen
Mr. Barry Copeland	Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Melissa Crouch	Scenic Alabama
Bob Forbus	Citizen
Shelby Howe	Tombigee Electric
Don Goetz	City of Jasper
Mary Alice Kenley	KPS Group
Brian Kennedy	Daily Mountain Eagle
David Knight	Walker County Economic Development Authority
Griffin Lassiter	City of Birmingham
Mary Grace Lewandowski	Birmingham Regional Planning Commission
Bill Matthews	Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments
Paul McCaleb	Jefferson County
Gwaltney McCollum	Walker County Industrial Board
Steve Ostaseski	Birmingham Regional Planning Commission
Randy Palmer	J. Randall Palmer, CPA
Jennifer Taylor	Congressman Aderholt
Joe Watts	AARC/Scenic Byways
Duane Wallace	City of Jasper
Bob Woods	Alabama Power