Lancaster County Heritage Byways

What would Lancaster County be without its Main Streets, historic turnpikes, and country roads? It’s a integral part of what makes the county a special place to live, and a great place to visit. Each and every route tells its own unique story about the county’s heritage. When you experience the byways of Lancaster County, you know you’re not in “Anyplace U.S.A.”

What Are Lancaster County Heritage Byways?

Lancaster County Heritage Byways are automobile routes that highlight the natural, cultural, and historic heritage of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Proposed byways are nominated by municipal governments (or by organizations with municipal approval), and routes that meet the program’s criteria are designated by the Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC).

The county byways program is managed separately from state and federal byways programs, but has similar goals. Lancaster County Heritage Byways with exceptional characteristics can later be considered for state or federal designation, if appropriate.
It’s not just about beautiful scenery. While some programs focus only on scenic roads, the Lancaster County Heritage Byways program includes routes that highlight different aspects of the county’s heritage.

It’s not just about tourism promotion. Some of the county’s byways will be promoted to residents and visitors, but others will be recognized only for the purpose of preserving their special character. With input from LCPC staff, municipalities can choose what path is best for each individual byway.

Types of Byways

The Lancaster County Planning Commission designates two types of Lancaster County Heritage Byways:

Tourism Development Byways are roads that are appropriate for heritage tourism marketing and promotion. Byways that meet certain criteria will be eligible for inclusion in Lancaster County Heritage, the county’s heritage tourism program.

Preservation Byways are roads that will not be marketed or promoted to visitors. Instead, the municipalities where the byway is located will focus on preserving and conserving the unique characteristics of the road and the resources associated with it.

What Makes the Program Unique?

Eligibility Criteria

What are the most significant features that people experience when traveling along a particular route? A Lancaster County Heritage Byway must exemplify at least one of six “intrinsic qualities”:

• Archeological
• Cultural
• Historic
• Natural
• Recreational
• Scenic

In addition, a Lancaster County Heritage Byway must:

• Be located in Lancaster County;
• Be a publicly accessible route that accommodates standard two-wheel-drive vehicles;
• Be long enough to tell a cohesive and compelling story about the road’s character, resources, or intrinsic qualities; and
• Have enough physical integrity to convey that story.

A Lancaster County Heritage Byway can be:

• A linear route with or without associated roads that branch off the main route; or
• A loop route of contiguous roads that highlight a particular intrinsic quality.

Designation Process

Step 1 Application and Nomination
Municipalities along the route (or organizations with municipal approval) submit an application to Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) staff.

Step 2 Determination of Eligibility
LCPC staff review the application and determine whether the route is eligible for County byway designation.

Step 3 Corridor Management Plan (CMP)
Municipalities along the route prepare a CMP focusing on issues that are significant to the corridor, and how they will address them.

Step 4 Adoption
Each municipality along the route adopts a resolution to support the implementation of the CMP’s goals and objectives.

Step 5 Designation
The Lancaster County Planning Commission officially designates the route as a Lancaster County Heritage Byway.

Step 6 Implementation
Together with LCPC and other organizations, municipalities implement the CMP. Tourism development byways are promoted as part of the Lancaster County Heritage program.

For more information, please contact:
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