

Project Summary 2004

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 Aug 11, 2003	Division Submission Date Sep 26, 2003	State Priority 4
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Project Info

Project No. SB-2004-ME-50883	Project Name The Acadia Byway Information and Interpretation Center
Project Year 2004	
Counties and/or Regions Involved Hancock County, Acadia National Park and Bar Harbor, Maine	
Location of Project along Byway(s) Route 3, 4.5 miles from Start of Byway, 2 miles from Acadia National Park Entrance, 4.5 miles from Bar Harbor	
Federal Lands Crossed by Involved Byway(s) NPS	

Associated Byways

State	Byway Name	Details	
ME	Acadia Byway	Designation Date 15 Jun 2000	Intrinsic Qualities* A,C,H,N,R,S
		Byway Organization none	

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

** Byway is located in multiple states.

Project Category

Project Type

Project associated with an All-American Road or a National Scenic Byway.

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

Yes

Eligibility Category

Byway Facilities

Ready-to-Go

Prior Projects

FHWA Proj No.	Year	Project Name	Amount	Status
<i>No prior projects</i>				

Project Abstract

This request is to purchase and renovate an existing Log Cabin Building (10,000 square feet) into the Acadia Byway Information and Interpretation Center (Acadia Byway Center). This building is located directly on the Acadia Byway, an All-American Road and a National Scenic Byway. The proposed Center will set the tone for the traveling experience. It will define a clear welcoming point to the 2.5 million travelers who arrive each year providing them with free information on the Byway's scenic resources, cultural and historical selections, recreation and lodging opportunities, and protection and preservation efforts. The Acadia Byway Center will also serve the Byway traveler by its direct connection to a safe, easily accessible hub for multi-modal transportation. There is currently no year-round facility devoted to providing this information on the Acadia Byway. This facility is a top priority of the Acadia Byway Corridor Management Plan, as well as the Town of Bar Harbor's and Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce's Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan. The project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2004.

Project Narrative

Scope of Proposed Project

The Acadia Byway is the primary passageway to both Acadia National Park and the Town of Bar Harbor. As such, the road is beautiful and unique yet heavily traveled during peak travel season. This request to purchase and renovate an existing Log Cabin Building into the Acadia Information and Interpretation Center (Acadia Byway Center) is an endeavor to both inform and educate the Byway traveler while at the same time enhance and sustain the beauty of the Byway itself.

The Log Cabin Building and property (8.6 acres) for sale sits directly on the Acadia Byway and is a real-estate opportunity that won't come again. The entire project is part of a much larger collaboration and real estate transaction between The Town of Bar Harbor, The Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce and the Housing Authority to solve some of the most pressing concerns our small island faces as a result of being the gateway community to Acadia National Park, the nation's 8th most visited park.

If awarded the Byway Facility grant money to create the Acadia Byway Center the rest of the collaborative project, which is not included in the grant request but part of the overall project, will also be realized. This includes a multi-modal transportation hub; long and short-term satellite parking and affordable housing for over 100 residents. The zoning on the 8.6 acres on the byway (640 feet of frontage) will be changed from commercial to governmental for the public benefit.

Tourism continues to be an important economic base to Bar Harbor and the State of Maine. Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park draw 55% of travelers through the region. The proposed year-round center will orient and educate the Byway traveler by defining a clear welcoming to the Acadia Byway providing travelers with all the information and services they need while visiting the area.

The Center will provide free information on the natural and cultural resources of the area, recreation and lodging options, in addition to education on preservation and protection strategies to help sensitize the visitor to their impacts while in the Park and traveling along the Byway. This will help us to attract visitors back to the area as well as to entice them to stay longer. The center is expected to service up to 1000 visitors daily.

The site of the proposed Acadia Byway Center is located on the right side of the Acadia Byway as you

Project Narrative (Continued)

drive toward Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park. 4.5 miles from the start of the Byway, the building and parking areas are situated perfectly with only two miles to the entrance to Acadia National Park and 4.5 miles to the Town of Bar Harbor. The building is currently a seasonal restaurant, gift and souvenir shop complex.

The Acadia Byway Center project will enhance the Byways intrinsic qualities through beautification and traffic calming efforts, such as removing multiple gravel entrances from the property to the Byway and increasing the vegetative buffers. Signage and well-engineered entrances and exits providing for flow of RVs and cars to and from the Acadia Byway Center and parking areas will improve safety along this busy stretch of the Byway.

The Acadia Byway Center has strong community backing as evidenced in letters of support and editorials in the local newspapers. The Chamber membership will formally vote to approve the project on August 12, 2003. The Town of Bar Harbor will also vote on the project through a town referendum. This will occur at the end of September 2003.

The Acadia Byway Information and Interpretation Center: A Vision

The Byway traveler will be easily directed to the Acadia Byway Center as it sits prominently on the Byway with easy right turn access as you head in the direction of Acadia National Park and the Town of Bar Harbor. The Acadia Byway Center will be designated by signage along Route 3 and through publications and information delivered nationally by the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce.

This facility will offer year-round and 24-hour services to travelers. Sustainable tourism is a major goal of the Town of Bar Harbor, the Chamber of Commerce, and Acadia National Park. Knowing that services are available year-round will encourage the traveler to visit the area during our slower times.

The aspiration of the project is to have 5000 square feet, or 3/4 of the display space of the building devoted to the Acadia Byway story as an area of national and international significance. The traveler and resident alike can learn about the resources on the island that are too numerous to list in detail.

The Acadia Byway Center will inform the traveler on how to see some of the nation's most scenic areas from a bus, on foot, by bicycle or automobile. The service industry of the island can provide numerous recreational resources including ferry service to Nova Scotia, whale watching cruises, rock climbing, hiking, and guided kayak tours. Other opportunities include two oceanariums, gardens, guided historical walking tours, amphitheater and educational programs.

The rest of the building's space will be used for office space for the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce along with a public meeting room and the Bar Harbor Information Center which will provide information on lodging, restaurants and shopping, as well as meeting the travelers more fundamental needs with restrooms, phone and Internet access, lodging and camping reservation systems, ATMs and vending machines.

The Acadia Byway Center will also serve as enticement for travelers to come in and find that they can leave their cars and RVs to utilize the on-site transit hub and parking areas. The RV traveler will have parking access as well as easy entrance and exit from the facility, improving safety and reducing congestion along the Acadia Byway. A coordinated effort will be made to promote alternative modes of transportation such as the propane powered Island Explorer Bus System, which provides pollution and fare free transportation around the island.

The easy availability of the bus system along with information on the extensive carriage and hiking trails systems will encourage more visitors to have a "car free" experience of Acadia National Park and Bar Harbor. This will increase the sustainability of the Acadia Byway for future generations from the unmanaged effects of tourism.

Project Narrative (Continued)

Priorities and Partnerships

Creating a Visitor Center is a primary goal of the Acadia Byway Corridor Management Plan, in addition to both the Town of Bar Harbor's and Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce's Comprehensive Strategic Master Plans. These plans stress preserving scenic areas, a prominent visitor center, and tourist-oriented public transportation options and education.

This project specifically addresses the following goals stated in the Acadia Byway Corridor Management Plan.

1. Ensure Health and Safety for Movement along the Byway:

There are serious safety concerns throughout the Route 3 corridor due to traveler unfamiliarity with the area combined with limited parking and turnouts. In the absence of adequate facilities, travelers park along the road's shoulders in small turnout areas causing significant safety and congestion problems. This project will not only inform travelers about driving limitations (especially for RVs), but will also provide the solutions for a safe driving experience by increasing parking and providing safe and easy turn-around and rest areas.

2. Support the Operations of the Island Explorer Bus System and Promote Intermodal Facilities:

In addition to parking, education and convenience services, this project will create pull-off and waiting areas with transportation information for the Island Explorer Bus System.

3. Promote Partnership between Community Organizations, Business and Local Government:

The Acadia Byway Center is a partnership between the Town of Bar Harbor and the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce. The entire scope of the project comprising of affordable housing, satellite parking areas, and the Acadia Byway Center is a collaboration of the Town of Bar Harbor, Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce and the Housing Authority.

4. Maintain Scenic Appearance of the Byway

By purchasing the 8.6 acres of land on the Acadia Byway 640 feet of road frontage will be improved and redesigned increasing the vegetative buffers and other beautification efforts. The building will be given a fresh look with improved interpretive signage. This will fundamentally change this section of the Byway from commercial advertising to public welcoming.

5. Promote Education on the Need for Resource Protection and Preservation:

The Acadia Byway Center will promote interpretation of the historical, natural, and scenic values of the Byway. Travelers will learn about the Acadia Philosophy of "leave no trace." The education will revolve around the historical and natural assets to encourage ecological awareness among residents and travelers.

6. Promote Sustainable Economic Development and Tourism Management

The Acadia Byway Center will assist travelers to understand our area and its delicate resources. It will also help us inform travelers about the services the area provides. This will help us to support our service industry, the economic backbone of our community. By also offering transportation alternatives, the Acadia Byway Center can help to reduce congestion and improve safety.

Anticipation of Maintenance and Improvements of the Acadia Byway Information and Interpretation Center:

Project Narrative (Continued)

The Town of Bar Harbor, pending a vote, has agreed to purchase the Log Cabin Building and adjacent property as part of a larger real estate transaction. The Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce must renovate, move-in and purchase the building within 12 months of the Town's purchase. The Town will only charge the Chamber of Commerce interest on the loan during this period. The cost to the Chamber for the purchase, renovations and upgrading the building from a seasonal to a year-round facility is slated to be 1.2 million dollars.

Since the responsibility of funding the Acadia Byway Center falls on the shoulders of 325 local business members of the Chamber of Commerce, the amount of grant monies received will directly impact the nature of the center and the ability of the Chamber to dedicate space to the Byway Story. The Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce receives no local or state funding.

We plan to fund the portion of the Center dedicated to services through our membership dues, and the selling of kiosk, brochure space and back lit display advertising to our business membership. This informational part of the Center will provide information on lodging, restaurants, recreational activities, and shopping, as well as meeting the more fundamental needs with restroom, local and Internet access, lodging and camping reservation systems, ATMs and vending machines.

Without grant monies we would need to find funding through other uses for the remaining space in the building to help us pay our mortgage and interest payments. Most likely we would rent this space as it is currently done to a souvenir store or ice cream shop. It is our greatest hope however that we can devote the entire space as a public resource for an interpretation and information center informing travelers as well as residents of the region about the Acadia Byway.

The Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1899 and incorporated in 1969. It is our intention to stay in this newly renovated Log Cabin facility for the foreseeable future. We have maintained a downtown visitor center for over 25 years; however, its basement location in a municipal building with no parking is not the most advantageous place to serve the traveler.

We do, however, have extensive experience serving the visitors to Bar Harbor. Each year we assist over 40,000 who come through our doors and over 65,000 who contact us for information through phone, fax or email. We have had a strong membership for over 50 years and have no doubts that this facility, in whatever final form it takes, will be well maintained for another 50 years. The Town of Bar Harbor is also strongly committed to this project, and if approved by the voters, the Town will maintain their parking areas, outside lighting, and transportation waiting areas.

Conclusion

This converging of missions with available real estate serving so many different community and Byway traveler needs is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Acadia Byway. It is doubtful that such a large parcel of available land on the Acadia Byway will come on the market again that meets the goals of the partners and the Scenic Byways program. Most of the entryway of the Acadia Byway is commercial. This project provides a place to serve the public's needs and also enhances and preserves the beauty of the Acadia Byway.

The Acadia Byway is an All-American Road and a National Scenic Byway. There is currently no year-round facility serving the needs of the Byway traveler. Byway facilities that fill a critical void, provide interpretive information or a need on the Byway or otherwise directly benefit byway travelers are a high priority under the selection criteria. This project is also a high priority of the Town of Bar Harbor. It is our hope that you will help us through funding this opportunity to not only assist the travelers on the Acadia Byway but also to help our community sustain the beauty of the area as well as support our economic base through tourism management.

Work Plan

Line Item	Task/Milestone Description	Start Date/ Duration	Work Category
001	Public Relations Campaign	06 Apr 2003 ongoing	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator		
	Justification: Inform the residents of Bar Harbor and the membership of the Chamber of Commerce about the scope of the project and its benefits to the traveler and residents alike.		
002	Town Council endorses prospective land acquisition	05 May 2003 14 days	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Ken Smith, Town Council, Chairman		
	Justification: The Town Council after two public forums agrees unanimously to move forward on the proposed Acadia Interpretation and Information Center, along with the land acquisition for satellite parking and housing projects. The purchase and sale is contingent on the vote of the Chamber membership and the vote of the Town residents.		
003	Chamber of Commerce Membership Votes to Approve Project	12 Aug 2003 14 days	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator		
	Justification: Create a presentation for the membership including the proposed business plan, structural redesign, and renovations. Membership votes on August 12.		
004	Hire an architect, engineering and general contracting firm	13 Aug 2003 14 days	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator		
	Justification: Write and put out to bid the entire project including design, construction and renovations of the building.		
005	Town Votes to Approve Project	16 Sep 2003 7 days	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Dana Reed, Town Manager, Town of Bar Harbor		
	Justification: Prepare the warrant and the ballot question. The Town residents have to approve the warrant and bond issue allowing for the Town to purchase the 8.6 acre parcel and buildings.		
006	Town Purchases Property and Buildings	01 Oct 2003 14 days	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Dana Reed, Town Manager, Town Of Bar Harbor		

Work Plan (Continued)

006	Justification: The Town enters into a purchase and sale agreement to purchase the entire 8.6 acre parcel of land on the Byway, including several buildings. Town gives the Log Cabin building and surrounding parking to the Chamber of Commerce for interest only payments to purchase outright within 12 months.		
007	Zoning Changed	14 Oct 2003 30 days	Byway Facilities
Responsible Party: Anne Krieg, Chair, Corridor Management Committee			
Justification: Anne Krieg, Director of the Town Planning Office, will write the zoning changes for the 8.6 acre parcel on the Acadia Byway. The zoning will be changed from commercial use to governmental use for the public's general benefit.			
008	Construction and conversion of the building into a visitor center	14 Oct 2003 120 days	Byway Facilities
Responsible Party: General Contractor			
Justification: Permits, demolition, septic improved, framing, piping and wiring, sheet rocking, taping and painting, interior trimming and flooring. Year-round insulation and heating system.			
009	Exhibit research and scripting	12 Feb 2004 30 days	Interpretive Information
Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator			
Justification: Using the inventory of the historical, natural, cultural resources of the Acadia Byway we will begin to develop the content of the exhibit space.			
010	Graphic design and production	12 Feb 2004 30 days	Interpretive Information
Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator			
Justification: Create a graphic look to the exhibits, hire photographers to capture the scenic views and gather historical photographs to include in the displays to tell the Acadia Byway Story.			
011	Exterior and interior exhibit installation	02 Feb 2004 20 days	Byway Facilities
Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator			
Justification: Begin the construction of the exhibits and installation into the building with the graphics and lighting.			
012	Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce transitions into new building	12 Mar 2004 30 days	Byway Facilities
Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator			

Work Plan (Continued)

012	Justification: The Chamber of Commerce will begin the transfer of offices and visitor information to the new facility. Center opened April 2004.		
013	Center open to Public	30 Apr 2004 ongoing	Byway Facilities
	Responsible Party: Clare Bingham, Byway Marketing Coordinator		
	Justification: We will begin to serve the public with an operating information and interpretation center.		

Budget

Line Item	Description	Total Cost	Request Amt.
001	Architectural redesign of the building	\$20,000	\$5,000
002	Engineering, site plans and schematics	\$10,000	\$2,500
003	Purchase building and property	\$800,000	\$200,000
004	Permits	\$10,000	\$2,500
005	Demolition	\$5,000	\$1,250
006	Heating system	\$20,000	\$5,000
007	Plumbing and septic system improvements for increased usage	\$50,000	\$12,500
008	Electrical improvement for exhibits	\$30,000	\$7,500
009	Interior Insulation	\$10,000	\$2,500
010	Drywall	\$10,000	\$2,500
011	Interior trim, flooring	\$40,000	\$10,000
012	Paint and Wallpaper, \$50 per hour plus materials	\$20,000	\$5,000
013	Exhibit research, scripting, graphics, \$55 per hour plus materials	\$15,000	\$3,750
014	Exterior exhibit fabrication, \$65 per hour plus materials	\$36,000	\$9,000
015	Exhibit installation, \$65 per hour plus materials	\$25,000	\$6,250
016	Contingency estimate, approximately 10% of costs	\$120,000	\$24,750

Budget (Continued)

Line Item	Description	Total Cost	Request Amt.
Totals		\$1,221,000	\$300,000

Match amount (total cost - requested amount) should be \$921,000 or 75.4% of total.
 Match accounted for in Match Breakdown is \$921,000 or 75.4% 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 \$976,800, and 20% of Total Cost is \$244,200.
 Your match amount cannot be less than 20% of Total Cost.

Match Breakdown

Source	Description	Type	Value
Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce		Cash	\$921,000
Total			\$921,000

Total from items above: \$921,000 or 75.4% of total.
 Match amount from Budget: \$921,000 or 75.4% 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 \$976,800, and 20% of Total Cost is \$244,200.
 Your match amount cannot be less than 20% of Total Cost.

Project Coordinator

Coordinator Name Clare Bingham		
Agency/Group Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce	Title Director	
E-mail Address director@barharborinfo.com		
Phone 207-288-5103	Fax 207-288-2565	
Street Address 93 Cottage Street P.O. Box 158		
City Bar Harbor	State ME	ZIP 04609

State Program

State ME	Byway Program Start Date 02 Jul 1969	
Scenic Byway Agency Maine Dept. of Transportation-Office of Environment		
State Scenic Byways Coordinator Bret Poi		
E-mail Address bret.poi@maine.gov		
Phone 207-624-3104	Fax 207-624-3101	
Street Address 16 State House Station		
City Augusta	State ME	ZIP 04333

Signatures

State Scenic Byways Agency

Bret Poi
Maine State Scenic Byway Coordinator

Date

Matching Funds Certification

Clare Bingham
Director, Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce

Date

Congressional Members

Associated States

State	Senators
ME	Collins, Susan Snowe, Olympia

State Representatives

State	District	Representative
ME	2	Michaud, Michael H.

Attachments

- Map of the location of the project on the byway
Electronic version: [Location on Byway](#)
- Site plan of the project
- Schematic plan of the building
Electronic version: [BAR HARBOR SCHEMATIC FLOOR PLAN1.jpg](#)
- Front View of Building
Electronic version: [Pfront view log cabin building.psd](#)
- View to Acadia Byway from Building
- Interior view
- front porch, future 24 hour area
- Letters of Support, 25 letters from residents, business and organizations
- Pages from Acadia Byway Corridor Management Plan that supports the Project

Project Recommendations

SB-2004-ME-50883: The Acadia Byway Information and Interpretation Center

Comments from mvigue:

Recommend Funding? Undecided

What agency will purchase the property? ROW/facility ownership is in question here. It appears to be a mortgage situation, not an outright purchase. Federal-aid regulations do not support that approach. If Chamber of Commerce ownership...is the chamber considered a legally organized not-for-profit entity? What kind of agreement will exist between facility owner and the byway entity for office space and interpretive space? For how many years?