

Byway Organization

Advisory Committee Structure



Byway Organization Structure

Your byway structure may be as different as your byway itself. Very few byway organizations have the same type of organization. Many byways function around the original sponsoring organizations. Some are independent with their own 501(c)(3) status. Described here are the most common forms of local byway organizational structures.

A Citizen Group

The simplest model is the citizen's group, a collection of community members or concerned citizens who gather together to accomplish a goal. This is likely to be predominantly volunteers with a sprinkling of agency representatives from the Conventional and Visitor Bureau (CVB), businesses and leaders along the byway pulled together by an enthusiastic champion.

Within a Nonprofit Organization

This is a committee or sub-committee that exists under the umbrella of a significant local nonprofit organization (501c3) whose interest is economic development or tourism. This organization is clearly supportive of byway sustainability and the byway's intrinsic qualities. Grant activity flows through the nonprofit organization.

Collaboration with a Nonprofit

A partnership with one or more community-based organizations can create a coalition where the best attributes of different entities can create an enhanced outcome rather than each going solo. Such an alliance increases impact, outreach and visibility for all parties, but certainly the byway committee. Compromises are essential for the greater good.

Independent Nonprofit Organization

The more formal organization is likely to be a coalition of citizens, CVB and business leaders, and local governmental representatives to include economic, financial institutions and planning officials under the umbrella of a 501c3 nonprofit entity. This group is positioned to attract donations and grant funds. The group is faced with specific legal requirements, benefits, and obligations. It reports annually to the state's Secretary of State. It can act alone or it can enter into partnerships with other organizations.

Imbedded in a Government Agency

In this option, the government agency, a planning or economic development division serves as the lead sponsor of the byway. The byway corridor becomes part of the entire regional plan by the government agency. The government agency may also draw in other agencies such as municipalities, state and federal agencies.

Legal Structure Creates Legal Protection

Over time, many citizen groups do adopt team rules, develop bylaws, elect officers and create organizational procedures. However, without taking steps to form a legal structure, you may not have legal protection.

"We've always stressed the importance of having a byway organization that is well represented by three basic groups: the tourism industry, local government (including federal and state agencies), and major landowners (private, local, state or federal). Add to that interest groups such as local historical societies, land trusts, colleges and universities, and interested citizens, and you have the makings of a great byway organization. The Top of the Rockies fits that description." - Sally Pearce, State Byway Coordinator, Colorado Department of Transportation

REFERENCE

Making the Grassroots Grow: Building and Maintaining Effective Byway Organizations. 2003. America's Byways Resource Center. http://www.nsbfoundation.com/images/publications/making_grassroots/5YourStructure.pdf