

RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

R.D. King

# A National Program of Scenic Roads and Parkways

## RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



The Secretaries of AGRICULTURE; COMMERCE; DEFENSE; HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE; INTERIOR; and the Administrator of the HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY.



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A NATIONAL PROGRAM  
of  
SCENIC ROADS AND PARKWAYS

The Recreation Advisory Council, recognizing the responsibility of the Federal Government to provide scenic driving opportunities as part of an overall recreation program,<sup>1</sup> recommends that a National Program of Scenic Roads and Parkways be developed:

- because driving for pleasure is one of America's most widely and actively engaged in outdoor recreation pursuits;
- because of the steeply mounting number of families owning automobiles and possessing the leisure time, income and desire to see and otherwise enjoy America's wealth of scenic and natural beauty, both close to home and at far distances;
- because our rapid urban and metropolitan growth is increasing the need for and decreasing the open-space resources for outdoor recreation;
- because of the substantial economic benefits generated by tourism and sightseeing made possible by attractive roads and parkways; and
- because of the great potential gains in esthetic and recreation benefits known to be associated with

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<sup>1</sup> Recreation Advisory Council Circular No. 2, General Policy Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation, Federal Role, Item C, April 1964.

future road planning, design, and construction activities.

While it was hoped that a specific program of scenic roads and parkways could be developed under the terms of the original assignment, it became apparent during the course of the study that it would not be possible without greater expenditure of funds and manpower than were available to the Recreation Advisory Council Staff.

For the above stated reasons and in light of the Staff study, "A National Program of Scenic Roads and Parkways," the Council specifically recommends:

1. That the elements of such a program be based primarily upon a comprehensive study to be initiated by the Council upon approval of this document. Such a study should include, but not necessarily be limited to:
  - a. Exploring the most practicable criteria for identifying scenic roads and parkways;
  - b. Developing reasonable geometric design standards for such facilities;
  - c. Determining mileage, location, and characteristics of present highways matching the designated criteria;
  - d. Determining the measures required to maintain or enhance the scenic, esthetic, and recreational qualities of present highways;
  - e. Determining optimum mileage systems with due consideration of the relative needs of urban and rural areas;
  - f. Clarifying the responsibility of the various levels of government for participating in the planning, development, and administration of the scenic road

and parkway program, including disposition of acquired lands not needed for rights-of-way, with due regard to the impact of this program on planning, development, and administration of other governmental programs.

- g. Establishing the relationship of the scenic roads and parkways program to other Federal land management programs;
- h. Determining the relative priorities of the scenic roads and parkways program in relation to total outdoor recreation needs and funds available to meet these needs;
- i. Recommending methods of financing construction and development;
- j. Determining the most feasible means of direct and indirect control of the roadsides of scenic roads and parkways;
- k. Establishing the relationship of a program of scenic roads and parkways to other forms of outdoor recreation including hiking trails and wilderness areas; and
- l. Determining the adequacy of existing legislation with a view to recommending new legislation where needed.

Federal, State, and local agencies will be depended upon to participate fully in the study and to furnish much of the underlying data. While the major share of the cost of the study will be borne through contributed services and data, specific costs of a study director and his immediate professional and secretarial assistants, consultants, travel, printing expenses, and related items, are estimated to be \$100,000 for a

- 1-year study. This cost will be absorbed by member agencies of the Council pursuant to provisions of Section 4(a) of Executive Order 11017, as amended.
2. That the agencies represented on the Council be encouraged, pending the completion of the study, to do everything possible, within the scope of their present authorizations, to enhance the scenic, esthetic, and recreational elements of existing public roads.
3. That all agencies—Federal, State, and local—engaged in a comprehensive and continuous transportation planning process, be encouraged to take account of outdoor recreation opportunities in the planning, design, and provision of metropolitan and regional highway networks. This planning process which is required for urban areas of 50,000 population or over by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 can be assisted by the 1½ percent planning, research, and development funds under the Federal Aid Highway Act, and by the Urban Planning Assistance funds under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954.
4. That the agencies represented on the Council encourage State and local agencies and private businesses concerned in highway and recreation development to improve present and future highway systems within their respective jurisdictions with an optimum of landscaping, scenic easements, scenic turnouts, rest areas, camp grounds, picnic facilities, and similar accommodations and the elimination of blight and billboards; and to develop improved and attractive accommodations for public use, reasonably accessible by highway and reasonably priced.
5. That the present highway systems of the Nation must continue to be the backbone of any future program involving scenic roads and parkways, since these systems already provide accessibility to and from centers of human habitation and activity. In the very nature of things, the existing highway networks are essential components of the total national recreation environment.
6. That the agencies represented on the Council, each within the scope of its own present authorizations, develop the administrative machinery to provide information and technical assistance services for their own purposes and for State, regional, and local agencies and private businesses wishing to incorporate recreation improvements into their present or future construction programs. An informative handbook on this subject should be issued by the Council for general distribution. The Department of Commerce is assigned the leadership in the preparation of this handbook.
7. That the Chairman of the Council explore with State toll road authorities and others, the possibility of establishing camp sites and other types of recreation accommodations on property administered by these authorities.
8. That the Department of Commerce, through its Bureau of Public Roads, encourage the States and their highway departments to make increasing use of the 1½ percent planning, research, and development funds to study scenic roads and their recreation potentials, and to utilize more fully the 3 percent authorization for landscape development and provision of recreational areas in Section 319 of Title 23, United States Code—Highways.

9. Pending completion of the study recommended in 1 above, Council members as a general rule will not sponsor nor endorse new Federal or Federal-aid proposals which involve scenic roads or parkways, except for projects of unusually high merit and priority. Upon request of the Executive Office of the President, the Recreation Advisory Council will review specific parkway or scenic road proposals and recommend appropriate action regarding them.
10. With the advice and under the general guidance of the Recreation Advisory Council Staff, the Department of Commerce shall be responsible for conducting the study and preparing the report called for in Item 1. The Council directs that the Department of Commerce shall select a staff director for such a study, subject to the approval of the Recreation Advisory Council Staff and agrees that the member agencies of the Council will make available on a contributed basis the services of personnel needed to accomplish the study on the schedule indicated.

By signature hereto, the member agencies of the Recreation Advisory Council approve the foregoing recommendations and will take such action as necessary to implement them at the earliest practicable date.

Approved:



Secretary of the Interior,  
Chairman



Secretary of Agriculture



Asst. Secretary of Defense



Secretary of Commerce



Secretary of Health,  
Education, and Welfare



Administrator, Housing and  
Home Finance Agency

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