

MAMALAHOA KONA HERITAGE CORRIDOR

The Mamalahoa Kona Heritage Corridor, a 10-mile segment from Palani Junction to Honalo junction, is the first State Scenic Byway in Hawaii. This scenic byway is sponsored by Pulama ia Kona Heritage Preservation Council whose mission is to “preserve, protect and enhance the special qualities of historic Kona.” Theme is **Pulama Kakou**, which translates as “we cherish all who enter this inclusive shell.”

A road is just a road until you tell a story! The cultural landscape and setting you experience along this byway is the result of many cultures coming to Kona over time, each contributing something from their culture toward the history of the area. History is a continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period or person, usually written as a chronological account; culture is a sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.

Once the footpath of ancient Hawaiians, Mamalahoa Highway was selected because it tells a historic story that is inclusive of all persons – ancient and contemporary – who have traveled it. This theme will reinforce to all who travel along this byway that it is important to cherish the concept of inclusiveness, which encourages hosts and visitors to welcome and accommodate one and all. It also provides for the inclusion of other additional adjoining heritage corridors along its complete path along the flanks of Hualalai, Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa and Kilauea mountains as it encircles Hawaii Island.

National Scenic Byways can be scenic, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational and/or natural. They are established to create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories and their treasured places. The mission of the scenic byway program is to provide resources to the byway community in creating a unique travel experience and enhanced local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designed byways.

To visit a place and learn about its history and see material evidence of its culture is something visitors have always done. However, in today’s market, this feature of the tourist industry can be better planned, improved and arranged in ways that generate greater appreciation and learning for both the resident and the visitor.

The GOAL of this Scenic Byway is to “maintain and enhance the livability of local residents through a variety of methods, including protecting, preserving and restoring historical resources while using those resources to contribute to economic stability through support of appropriate tourism.”

Included with this State Scenic Byway designation will be:

- 1) Preservation guidelines to help maintain standards of historic structural integrity and design and tell the story of the area. However, no one will tell property owners what to do. The jurisdiction of the Scenic byway is only the road. Therefore we appeal to property owners to VOLUNTARILY do what they can to maintain the historic character of their building/store.

- 2) A road improvement plan to improve traffic flow and safety on what is now a very narrow, winding road while at the same time integrating pre-selected historic features as part of carefully designed pull over areas, taking into consideration the needs of the traveler.
- 3) An interpretive plan to serve as a compilation of historic information that can be used on signage, brochures, flyers, marketing information and other applications.
- 4) A beautification plan for this roadway section to further integrate native foliage as part of the total historic experience offered.

Notice of Grant Award includes the goal to develop a Corridor Management Plan that will provide a meaningful experience to the byway traveler and preserve the byway's intrinsic historic quality of indigenous Hawaiian culture and European and Asian settlement. Inventory, assessment and analysis of historic resources will provide necessary information. The plan will address commitment and support of community and local government, enhancement of the traveler's experience, and economic development.

Economic development is the foremost goal of a Scenic Byway. Research indicates that more and more travelers refer to websites to decide where they want to visit before they even leave home. Studies also show that repeat visitors who find meaningful experiences add to increased visitor spending.

This project benefits the byway traveler by ensuring the experience of Mamalahoa Kona Heritage Corridor is remembered for its ease, comfort and safety. The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) resulting from this project will organize and prioritize efforts that will provide the traveler with meaningful experiences in a rural setting. Through the CMP and its associated planning process, local businesses, residents and organization stakeholders along the byway will be better prepared to preserve and enhance the historic resources and to provide travelers with accurate information about these resources but not with a top-down process: key to planning how to manage this corridor is from involvement of community members such as you.

Funding for Federal Highways Grants include: 1) State and Tribal Programs; 2) Corridor Management Plan (approval to begin on March 06, 2009); 3) Safety Improvements; 4) Byway Facilities; 5) Access to Recreation; 6) Resource Protection; 7) Interpretive Information; and 8) Marketing Program.

Following are the reasons for Pulama's project:

Cultural heritage tourism means traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present and has become a major part of the travel experience. But, in addition to creating new jobs, new business and higher property values, well-managed tourism improves the quality of life and builds community pride. It creates a diversification of local economies and preservation of a community's unique character. It is a challenge to ensure that tourism does not destroy the very heritage that attracts visitors in the first place as tourism does put demands on infrastructure such as roads, airport, water supplies and public services like police and fire protection. It is important to find the fit between a community and tourism.

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