
A. STRATEGIES SEQUENCING & RESPONSIBILITIES

The matrix provided on the following two pages summarizes each goal and objective from the Strategies section of the management plan and provides the following information:

- Alpha-numeric designation
- Page number within the Strategies section of this plan for greater detail
- Party or parties responsible for implementation
- Timeframe (near, mid and long term)

With regard to the timeframe, although it only addresses the first five years of the MSNHA's existence upon completion of this plan, the heritage area is obviously expected to exist long beyond that time horizon. However, attempting to forecast this plan's implementation steps beyond that timeframe would not be a useful exercise given that the plan will need to be revisited by that time, as much will have changed.

The objectives contained on the following two pages have been organized by the Strategy sections six goals. Below is an overview of each:

1) Develop the MSNHA's local coordinating entity – the University of North Alabama's Muscle Shoals Regional Center – into a highly-effective organization capable of successfully implementing the Management Plan once completed.

This goal is focused exclusively on building the MSNHA as an entity so it can effectively achieve the balance of the goals for the heritage area. Other than potentially utilizing the resources of organizations such as area chambers of commerce, the NPS, and the Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA), these supporting objectives will rely solely on the efforts of the MSNHA. Also, each objective should be initiated during the first year ("near term") following this plan's adoption and should continue throughout the heritage area's existence.

2) Conduct research, education and interpretation related to the MSNHA's primary themes as a means of documenting and telling the story of the Heritage Area's unique cultural heritage.

Roughly half of the strategies proposed for this goal should be initiated during the first year ("near term") after this plan's adoption, while the balance should occur during years two and three ("mid term"). The strategies that are considered more pressing are those that relate directly to interpreting the heritage area, such as further research into themes, the development of thematic tours, the creation of interpretive materials (brochures, web-based tools, etc.), and the programming of living history demonstrations. Strategies deemed less urgent are those such as the establishment of oral history programs and educational curriculum for area schools. Although it would clearly be desirable to have the proposed interpretive centers developed within the near term, it is recognized that this strategy is the most ambitious and will take time. Thus, its initiation is suggested for the years two and three (mid-term) timeframe. While the MSNHA will need to spearhead these strategies, most will require partnerships with other entities, such as the local schools.

3) Preserve and enhance the Heritage Area's numerous natural and cultural resources, particularly those with a clear link to the MSNHA's three primary themes.

The strategies related to this goal being recommended for initiation during the first year after this plan's adoption are those that relate to the improvement of the quality of various historic sites and attractions. Because the old adage "you only have one chance to make a first impression" is so applicable to heritage tourism, it is critical that sites and attractions that the MSNHA might promote have a high level of quality to avoid underwhelming visitors and giving the heritage area a negative reputation. Efforts that would be initiated during the second and third year timeframes (mid term) are related to less pressing matters, such as land preservation, historic building preservation, and the enhancement of commercial corridors and historic downtowns. Key partners for these efforts will include local governments, property owners, and historic preservation and conservation groups.

4) Serve as a catalyst for the development of outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities.

The only year one (near term) strategy related to this goal is the MSNHA's promotion of existing businesses related to outdoor recreation and the establishment of new such businesses. All of the other strategies, with one exception, are mid-term recommendations for initiation during years two and three, including greenway planning and the creation of interpretive materials for outdoor recreation. The one exception is strategy 4-C, working toward greater physical and visual access to the river. While that strategy is a worthwhile objective, given the numerous more pressing needs, that recommendation has been designated a long term (years four and five) strategy. Nearly all of these strategies require partners for the MSNHA to work with. In fact, those partners will need to spearhead most of these strategies, such as greenway development.

5) Encourage and assist in community enhancement and the development of tourism "infrastructure," such as dining, lodging and tourism-oriented retail.

This goal consists of only three strategies – the enhancement of specific areas of communities (commercial corridors, downtowns, and neighborhoods), the development of tourism-supporting businesses (lodging, dining and entertainment), and the development of retail relevant to the heritage area. Because all three issues cannot come to fruition overnight, they have been deferred to the mid-term (years two and three) timeframe. They will also require partners to the MSHNA who will need to take the lead role, including local governments, chambers of commerce, Main Street programs, and similar other entities.

6) Market and promote the Heritage Area through a number of vehicles to increase heritage tourism as a means of economic development.

All four of the strategies for this goal are proposed to be initiated in year one (near term) because they are all marketing efforts that can be accomplished within a relatively brief amount of time and they are important to jump-starting increased tourism. One of these tasks – creation of a website – has already been initiated and will only require some recommended revisions. Similarly, networking using social media is a tool that can be implemented quickly at very little cost. Of these four strategies, the only one that cannot be achieved solely by the MSNHA will be the promotion and establishment of special events, which will rely on partners.



The MSNHA already has an excellent website that will only need some minor revisions to become consistent with the recommendations of this plan.

The following two pages feature the matrix just summarized above.

No.	Recommendation	Page #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
1	Develop the MSNHA's local coordinating entity into a highly-effective organization			
1-A	Establish a leadership program to help maintain the effectiveness of current board members, committees, and staff	3	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
1-B	Secure dependable funding sources both to match available federal funding and to sustain the MNHA in the long-term	4-5	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
1-C	Involve a broad cross-section of MSNHA stakeholders at all levels of the organization	5-8	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
1-D	Develop a network of partner sites, attractions, and events that meet minimum standards of quality and contribute to the MSNHA	8	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
1-E	Establish a promotional program that markets the NHA's sites, attractions, and events, as well as the MSNHA as an entity	8-10	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
2	Conduct research, education and interpretation related to the MSNHA's primary themes			
2-A	Support and/or sponsor research into the various themes associated with the MSNHA	11	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
2-B	Establish an oral history program utilizing junior high, high school and college students to record histories from individuals	11-12	MSNHA & area schools	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
2-C	Create an educational curriculum within the NHA's grade schools and high schools to teach the primary themes	12-13	MSNHA & school districts	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
2-D	Explore the development of one or more interpretive centers for the MSNHA, including leveraging facilities of other entities	13-17	MSNHA & partners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
2-E	Develop a series of theme-based tours for walking, cycling, and driving using a variety of scales and interpretive tools	17-22	MSNHA & partners	Near Term (Yr. 1)
2-F	Create a series of educational and interpretive materials telling the MSNHA's story ("coffee table" book - Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3))	22	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)*
2-G	Program sites/attractions throughout the MSNHA with regular or periodic living history demonstrations and events	23	MSNHA & partners	Near Term (Yr. 1)
3	Preserve and enhance the Heritage Area's numerous natural and cultural resources			
3-A	Adopt minimum standards of quality to insure "tourism readiness" for partner sites and to be an incentive to "emerging" sites	24-25	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
3-B	Provide technical assistance and grants to tourist-ready and emerging sites and attractions	25-26	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
3-C	Work with existing land trust organizations and willing land owners to protect lands through conservation easements	27	MSNHA, land trusts & owners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
3-D	Work with willing property owners to protect historic resources with facade easements	27-28	MSNHA, ATHP & owners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
3-E	Provide technical assistance to communities to establish public policy tools to preserve resources and reinforce character	28-31	MSNHA & communities	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
4	Serve as a catalyst for the development of outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities			
4-A	Work with partnering entities to develop a greenway system along the Tennessee River linking with sites and existing greenways	32	MSNHA & partners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
4-B	Once the greenway system is expanded, establish a program for individuals and groups to "adopt" segments of the greenway	32	MSNHA & partners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
4-C	Work with one or more partnering entities to develop additional visual and physical access to the river	33	MSNHA & partners	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)
4-D	Develop promotional and interpretive materials related to outdoor recreation, such as river access points and natural resources	33	MSNHA & partners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
4-E	Encourage and promote the development of outdoor recreational businesses/services, such as outfitter stores and outdoor guides	33	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)

No.	Recommendation	Page #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
5	Encourage and assist in community enhancement and the development of tourism “infrastructure”			
5-A	Provide technical assistance for public policy strategies to enhance strip commercial corridors, downtowns and neighborhoods	34	MSNHA & communities	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
5-B	Encourage the development of dining, entertainment, and lodging that would appeal to cultural tourists visiting the MSNHA	34-35	MSNHA & partners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
5-C	Encourage the development of retail linked to the Heritage Area, such as authentic regional products and an outfitters store	35	MSNHA & partners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
6	Market and promote the Heritage Area through a number of vehicles to increase heritage tourism			
6-A	Promote existing special events tied to the history, cultural traditions, and themes of the MSNHA, and create/promote new events	36	MSNHA & partners	Near Term (Yr. 1)
6-B	Develop a MSNHA website targeting tourists that highlights the themes, attractions, tours, and a schedule of events	36-37	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
6-C	Utilize social networking systems to promote the Heritage Area	37	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)
6-D	Utilize conventional means of promotion, such as print ads, brochures, and maps to promote the MSNHA and its various attractions	37-38	MSNHA	Near Term (Yr. 1)

B. FIVE-YEAR WORK PLAN

Consistent with the Strategies Summary matrix contained in the previous section of this Implementation Plan, below is a list of strategies for each of the timeframes during the MSNHA's first five years following this Management Plan's adoption. The three timeframes are organized as follows:

- Near Term: Year 1
- Mid Term: Years 2-3
- Long Term: Years 4-5

The timeframe associated with each strategy below indicates *the timeframe during which each strategy should be initiated*. Depending upon the type of strategy, many of them should occur continuously after their initiation. For example, "Strategy 1-A: Establish a leadership program to help maintain the effectiveness of current board members, committees, and staff" is a strategy that should continue throughout the life of the heritage area. However, some strategies will occur only as long as needed for their achievement. An example would be "Strategy 2-D: Explore the development of one or more interpretive centers for the MSNHA, including leveraging facilities of other entities." Once feasibility studies are prepared for the three potential interpretive centers, and once the viable centers (if any) are developed, their development will obviously no longer be necessary.

C1. NEAR TERM: YEAR 1

The first year of the MSNHA's operation after the adoption of this management plan should focus on strengthening the coordinating entity, interpretation, and marketing. In particular, the "low hanging fruit" (easy and/or inexpensive projects) should be pursued. An example of a project that should not be pursued at this point is the exploration of the development of the potential interpretive centers. While that does not mean that meetings and early planning should not occur, but such a substantial undertaking would be difficult to focus on without distracting from the various strategies listed below for Year 1. Below are the proposed near-term tasks organized by goals:

1) Develop the MSNHA's local coordinating entity into a highly-effective organization

- 1-A: Establish a leadership program to help maintain the effectiveness of current board members, committees, and staff
- 1-B: Secure dependable funding sources both to match available federal funding and to sustain the MNHA in the long-term
- 1-C: Involve a broad cross-section of MSNHA stakeholders at all levels of the organization
- 1-D: Develop a network of partner sites, attractions, and events that meet minimum standards of quality and contribute to the MSNHA
- 1-E: Establish a promotional program that markets the NHA's sites, attractions, and events, as well as the MSNHA as an entity

2) Conduct research, education and interpretation related to the MSNHA's primary themes

- 2-A: Support and/or sponsor research into the various themes associated with the MSNHA
- 2-E: Develop a series of theme-based tours for walking, cycling, and driving using a variety of scales and interpretive tools
- 2-F: Create a series of educational and interpretive materials telling the MSNHA's story ("coffee table" type book should occur during Yrs. 2-3)
- 2-G: Program sites/attractions throughout the MSNHA with regular or periodic living history demonstrations and events

3) Preserve and enhance the Heritage Area's numerous natural and cultural resources

- 3-A: Adopt minimum standards of quality to insure "tourism readiness" for partner sites and to be an incentive to "emerging" sites
- 3-B: Provide technical assistance and grants to tourist-ready and emerging sites and attractions

4) Serve as a catalyst for the development of outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities

- 4-E: Encourage and promote the development of outdoor recreational businesses/services, such as outfitter stores and outdoor guides

6) Market and promote the Heritage Area through a number of vehicles to increase heritage tourism

- 6-A: Promote existing special events tied to the history, cultural traditions, and themes of the MSNHA, and create/promote new events
- 6-B: Develop a MSNHA website targeting tourists that highlights the themes, attractions, tours, and a schedule of events
- 6-C: Utilize social networking systems to promote the Heritage Area
- 6-D: Utilize conventional means of promotion, such as print ads, brochures, and maps to promote the MSNHA and its various attractions

C2. MID TERM: YEARS 2-3

The strategies listed below focus on research, education, and interpretation, as well as the preservation and enhancement of cultural resources and places, outdoor recreational development, and community improvements. Below are the proposed mid-term tasks organized by goals:

2) Conduct research, education and interpretation related to the MSNHA's primary themes

- 2-B: Establish an oral history program utilizing junior high, high school and college students to record histories from individuals
- 2-C: Create an educational curriculum within the NHA's grade schools and high schools to teach the primary themes
- 2-D: Explore the development of one or more interpretive centers for the MSNHA, including leveraging facilities of other entities (initiate feasibility studies for interpretive centers)

3) Preserve and enhance the Heritage Area's numerous natural and cultural resources

- 3-C: Work with existing land trust organizations and willing land owners to protect lands through conservation easements
- 3-D: Work with willing property owners to protect historic resources with facade easements
- 3-E: Provide technical assistance to communities to establish public policy tools to preserve resources and reinforce character

4) Serve as a catalyst for the development of outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities

- 4-A: Work with partnering entities to develop a greenway system along the Tennessee River linking with sites and existing greenways
- 4-B: Once the greenway system is expanded, establish a program for individuals and groups to "adopt" segments of the greenway
- 4-D: Develop promotional and interpretive materials related to outdoor recreation, such as river access points and natural resources

5) Encourage and assist in community enhancement and the development of tourism "infrastructure"

- 5-A: Provide technical assistance for public policy strategies to enhance strip commercial corridors, downtowns and neighborhoods

- 5-B: Encourage the development of dining, entertainment, and lodging that would appeal to cultural tourists visiting the MSNHA
- 5-C: Encourage the development of retail linked to the Heritage Area, such as authentic regional products and an outfitters store

C3. LONG TERM: YEARS 4-5

Although the proposed strategies for years 4 and 5 are limited to only one (4-C), that fact should not imply that the MSNHA will not be extremely active and productive by this point of its existence. Instead, many of the strategies listed during the near-term and mid-term timeframes will continue throughout the life of the heritage area. Thus, there is somewhat of a cumulative effect occurring as each timeframe plays out. Below is the sole proposed long-term task:

4) Serve as a catalyst for the development of outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities

- 4-C: Work with one or more partnering entities to develop additional visual and physical access to the river



By providing even greater access to the Tennessee River than currently exists, the MSNHA can leverage outdoor recreation options, such as duck hunting, into extended visit durations and spending within the heritage area.

C. KEY PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

The various programs and projects described below have already been explained in this plan's previous Strategies section. However, rather than addressing the broader aspects of these concepts, the text below will focus on the more detailed implementation aspects of them.

D1. PROGRAMS

There are two key programs currently proposed for the MSNHA: 1) the program of designating "visit ready" and "emerging" sites/attractions, and 2) the heritage area's grants program. Both are explained below.

Visitor Ready & Emerging Sites/Attractions Program

The purpose of this program for "visitor ready" resources is to be able to promote sites, attractions and events that meet a minimum standard based upon best practices so that visitors to the MSNHA are not disappointed by resources that fail to meet their expectations. Conversely, the parallel program of "emerging" sites and attractions would identify those that are not yet deemed visitor ready per the best practices standards, but whose operators seek to achieve such status. The benefit of being determined "visitor ready" is that the MSNHA will aggressively market them, while the advantage of being designated "emerging" is that funding and technical assistance will be targeted toward them. It is recommended that standards to determine visitor readiness address the following key issues:



These considerations are expanded upon further within the Strategies section of this plan. Because of the potential political nature of applying the standards and the need for clear objectivity, it is recommended that a small panel of experts (3 to 5) be appointed to administer the standards and to make the designations. Ideally, for the initial round of evaluations, the panel's experts would live and work outside of the MSNHA, and it is recommended that they consist of staff and board members from other NHAs. Once that initial round of evaluations occurs, a more local panel (5 to 10 people) will likely be needed and might be comprised of local CVB representatives and similar professionals. Each of the evaluation considerations listed above could be rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest.

First Steps

1. Fine-tune the criteria if needed
2. Assemble the evaluation panel
3. Implement the initial round of evaluations

MSNHA Technical Assistance Grants Program

It is proposed in this plan's Strategies section that the heritage area establish a grants program to help its various partners secure technical assistance as needed. In general, emerging sites should be given priority over the other partner sites that have already "arrived" with respect to tourist readiness.

However, that general principle does not mean that meritorious projects of tourist-ready partners should not also be considered. The following criteria should be applied to grant applications by the MSNHA organization:



It is recommended that grants not be given for operational costs of sites/organizations or the acquisition of property. While it may not need to be completely precluded, funding of physical improvements should be allowed only in special cases, if at all. An exception might be the emergency preservation of some threatened cultural resource closely associated with one of the MSNHA's primary interpretive themes.

A grant program will require a very clear and systematic approach, including annual funding cycles, an application for those seeking funding, and the objective application of the criteria listed above. It will also require project monitoring, compliance, reporting, and similar activities. A grants manager, who should be one or both of the recommended staff Technical Assistants, will need to be familiar with federal regulations such as NEPA and Section 106, matching requirements, and reporting requirements.

First Steps

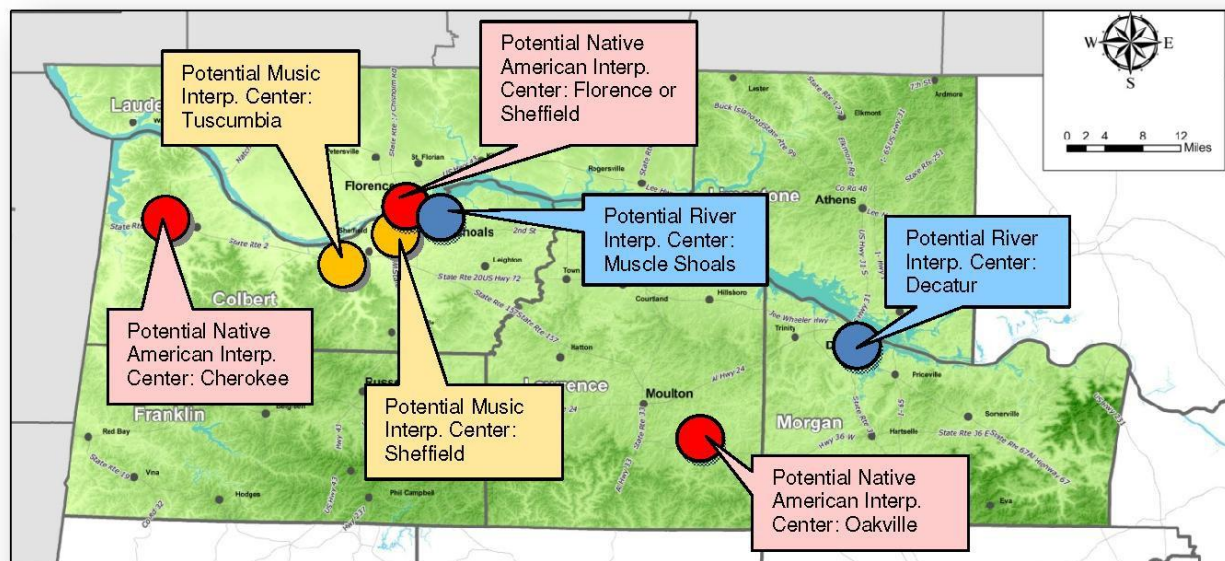
1. Fine-tune the criteria
2. Prepare the grant application using good models
3. Initiate the funding once a pool of funds are adequately budgeted

D2. PROJECTS

Unlike MSNHA programs that are on-going activities, "projects" are one-time actions having a clear beginning and ending point. While this plan proposes a broad range of projects, the largest and most critical projects include the potential development of interpretive centers, the enhancement of historic sites, and community enhancement projects. Each of these three project types are elaborated on below.

Exploring the Development of Interpretive Centers

The general ideas for the three potential interpretive centers was previously described in Objective 2-D of the Strategies section of this management plan, as well as within this plan's Interpretive Plan. In fact, the corresponding map is repeated below. While the Strategies section of this plan focuses on the rationale for the various locations that might be considered, their relative merits, and the stories that might be interpreted, this section of the Implementation Plan will focus more on what interpretive centers might entail and the approaches for exploring and potentially initiating their development. It must also be emphasized that *this plan has not recommended the development of interpretive centers per se, but rather that they be considered via feasibility studies*. Interpretive centers do not necessarily require a large amount of square footage, but they should feature the following key components:



Potential Scale & Costs

For very preliminary planning purposes, interpretive centers - if relatively modestly scaled - should be expected to require between 5,000 and 10,000 square feet of space. Based upon examples of other interpretive centers and depending upon the level of quality, development costs (planning and design, property acquisition, development, and exhibit installation) might range between approximately \$400 and \$500 per square feet. If utilizing an existing structure, as has been encouraged by this plan, the physical development costs might be less. Regardless, a general cost range of \$2 million to \$5 million can be expected per interpretive center until preliminary planning can occur. *These figures should be refined based upon the necessary feasibility studies that will need to occur in time.*



This proposed jazz museum in Downtown High Point, North Carolina was estimated to cost approximately \$400 per square foot. It was intended to leverage economic spin-off benefits to the surrounding area.

Interim v. Ultimate Centers

Although feasibility studies for the potential interpretive centers may determine that no centers are viable, they might also determine that one or more interim centers are viable, to be later followed up by one or more “ultimate” centers. Because of the ambitiousness of pursuing the development of multiple interpretive centers within the MSNHA in light of likely funding challenges, it is important to have a two-tiered strategy for each center that identifies a more modest initial phase for a center that utilizes an existing facility. If the ultimate vision for a new interpretive center fails to materialize over time, the interim center might need to become the ultimate center. In fact, feasibility studies may determine that one or more interpretive centers are not viable prior to such projects even gaining traction. Regardless, below are concepts for each proposed center:

Tennessee River Interpretive Center

Potential Interim Location:

- Existing Givens Interpretive Center at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Decatur

Potential Ultimate Location:

- Downtown Decatur riverfront as part of proposed Ingalls Harbor development
- TVA property in Muscle Shoals

Native American Interpretive Center

Potential Interim Location:

- Existing Oakville Mounds interpretive center

Potential Ultimate Location:

- Downtown Cherokee (existing or new building)
- Florence (City-funded facility)
- Tuscumbia Landing - Sheffield

Music Interpretive Center

Potential Interim Location:

- Alabama Music Hall of Fame in Tuscumbia

Potential Ultimate Location:

- Downtown Sheffield (existing or new building)
- 3613 Jackson Highway (Muscle Shoals Sound Studio)

For the potential “interim” centers to successfully become long-term centers, they would all need improvements in a variety of ways. For example, the existing Givens Interpretive Center in Decatur addresses the natural history of the Tennessee River and related Native American history, but it does not address many of the river theme’s interpretive sub-themes as identified by this plan, including the TVA developments of the early-twentieth century.

First Steps

1. Perform a feasibility study for the centers
2. Perform a site selection study for the centers
3. Create preliminary design documents
4. Develop a fund-raising plan for the centers

Historic Site Enhancements

As noted throughout this plan, one important way to improve the MSNHA will be to help improve the many cultural sites and attractions that already exist and are in operation. Working with site operators on such improvements will be one of the duties of the MSNHA’s Technical Assistant for preservation and interpretation. Likewise, the heritage area’s grant program will be targeted to sites needing assistance, including those designated as “emerging.” While every site’s needs will differ, the following principles will apply to many (these principles have been adapted from the considerations recommended elsewhere in this plan for determining whether a site is “tourist ready” or “emerging.”):

Principles for Site Enhancements

- *Sufficient wayfinding must be available so patrons can easily find the site:* Can the site be found solely via directional signage upon entering the community from one or more key corridors? Are there any gaps in signage that could cause the patron to get lost? Can the site also be readily found using printed maps and/or telecommunications (internet mapping, apps, etc.)? These are all questions that should be posed.
- *Parking should be in sufficient amounts and convenient to the site for a broad range of transportation modes without detracting from the site itself:* At a minimum, there should be plenty of parking for conventional automobiles and trucks. For the most popular sites, bus parking should also be available. While parking should be within a comfortable walking distance from the key anchors of the site, they should not visually impact the site’s overall character and integrity.
- *Visitor comfort amenities should make for an enjoyable visit:* Every historic site or cultural attraction should have adequate public restrooms, water fountains and similar amenities within an indoor facility. Outdoor amenities should include paved pathways that are ADA accessible, benches, trash receptacles and lighting. Opportunities for picnicking should also be considered.
- *Sites/attractions should have standard days and hours of operation:* Since weekends are the peak tourist days of the week, most sites should attempt to be open on weekends. Preferably, sites should also be open most days of the week. Many tourist-oriented businesses that are closed one day per week choose Mondays, and cultural sites should consider the same policy. However, some may also choose Sundays to be closed for religious purposes.
- *Sites/attractions should be physically maintained at a high level:* Physical maintenance is important for two reasons in particular. First, maintenance is the best method for preserving cultural resources. Without cultural resources, heritage areas have difficulty succeeding. Secondly, well-maintained sites and attractions are more appealing to visitors and project a more positive image to help market the heritage area.
- *Historic authenticity and integrity should be preserved and reinforced:* As experience has confirmed, a key aspect sought by most heritage tourists is authenticity. It is important that any improvements to historic sites and attractions be done with a high level of authenticity. There are various guidelines

that can be utilized for this principle, such as the federal government's Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitation. Those particular standards are used to determine whether qualified historic building rehabilitation projects can earn the lucrative federal investment tax credits.

- *Accurate and effective interpretation must be provided at historic sites and attractions:* It is important that the stories told are factual and of interest to patrons. An example of making interpretation interesting to a broader range of the tourist market is the recent trend for most Civil War sites. Rather than simply telling the story of names, dates and military strategy, interpretation now addresses issues such as the civilian experience, African-Americans in the war, the role of women, and similar topics aimed at a broader and more diverse audience. Interpretation should also include the use of creativity and interactive technology when possible.

For an example of how these principles might be applied to a single site within the MSNHA, please see Appendix 4. (Note: Assuming we can still work this in down the road, this will be the Concept Plan for a selected site in which we apply the principles above to better illustrate them in light of a real world situation. Because it is supplemental to the balance of the plan and is not actually in the scope of services, it can be done later during the submitted draft plan's review period).

Community Enhancements

The MSNHA needs to work with the three councils of government, municipal planning agencies, downtown revitalization entities, and others to enhance communities as a means of overall "product improvement" for the heritage area. Below is a summary of three areas in particular for focus by the MSNHA, all of which are already explained in greater detail in Objective 3-E of this plan's Strategies section.

Highway Corridors

As noted throughout this plan, heritage tourists place a high value on authenticity and environments that are unique and historic in character. However, the typical highway corridor that serves as the gateway to provide a first impression for the MSNHA's key communities is anything but authentic, unique or historic. Instead, most of these corridors are unattractive and dominated by generic "franchise" architecture. The key two elements needed for transformation of strip commercial corridors are:

- 1) redesign and redevelopment of the road profile within the public right-of-way to introduce landscaping, human-scaled lighting, sidewalks, and other pedestrian-friendly amenities; and
- 2) revised zoning and design standards for the adjacent private realm to minimize the size and quantity of signage, to place buildings closer to the road, to relocate more of the parking to the rear and side of buildings, and to provide cross-access between adjacent properties.

Downtowns

In many respects, historic downtowns are the converse of strip commercial corridors. They are generally historic, authentic, unique and pedestrian-friendly. They also tend to have a much higher percentage of locally-owned businesses (unique) than do strip commercial corridors. They should serve as the heritage area's backbone for visitor shopping, dining and – when possible – lodging. Many of the MSNHA's key communities already have Main Street programs or some other type of revitalization entity. The MSNHA should work closely with those organizations where they exist and encourage their establishment where they are lacking. The State Main Street program is another important partner. In many cases, the starting point for revitalization is a public input process and master plan, including a market analysis to determine which uses and business types are economically viable. In other cases the planning and analysis has been completed and implementation should be the focus. It is recommended that the National Main Street Program's "Four Point" Approach that treats downtowns holistically be applied, as follows:

- Organization: including a board of directors, issue-based working committees, and paid staff
- Design: streetscape, building rehabilitations, infill development, signage, landscaping

- Economic Restructuring: market analysis, optimal tenant mix, incentives, business development
- Promotion: logo development, website, social media, special events, joint advertising

For an example of how these principles or “Four Points” might be applied to a single downtown within the MSNHA, please see Appendix 5. (Note: Assuming we can still work this in down the road, this will be the Concept Plan for a selected downtown in which we apply the principles above to better illustrate them in light of a real world situation. Because it is supplemental to the balance of the plan and is not actually in the scope of services, it can be done later during the submitted draft plan’s review period).

