



## ***Section 7 Historic Resources – Heritage Tourism***

### **PREFACE**

The purpose of the Historic Resources element is to complement land use planning by providing guidance for the identification and protection of the County's abundant historic resources and to ensure that land use decisions are made in a manner that attempts to preserve these historic resources whenever possible. The plan recognizes that stewardship of cultural resources is a responsibility of the entire community and outlines a proactive approach for the preservation of sites that give Hanover County its unique character and distinguish it from other localities.

### **THE PRESENT**

Historic resources within the County have been periodically evaluated and surveyed, most recently in 2005. These surveys have served to improve the protection of historic resources through identification and documentation; surveyed properties are now included in the County's GIS database. Currently, there is documentation and evaluation of more than 1000 resources throughout the County, many of which may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. With assistance from the National Park Service, work is ongoing to document areas associated with Civil War battlefields and campaigns; battlefield sites are also included in GIS once documentation of a site has been completed.

As a means to protect historic resources, the County has designated eight Overlay Historic Preservation Districts (OHP); the properties in these districts have been determined to have historic, architectural or cultural significance. Regulations within each OHP district are intended to ensure that uses will maintain the cultural character of the vicinity and that structures are protected from irreversible exterior alteration or demolition. The Hanover County Architectural Review Board (ARB) was established to administer the OHP district requirements.

The Hanover County Historical Commission serves as an advisory body on the preservation and promotion of the County's historic heritage. The 21-member Historical Commission serves as a resource of ideas and initiatives to enhance the cultural experience. The Historical Commission routinely reviews zoning proposals and recommends ways to reduce the adverse impacts that new development may have on affected historic resources and to enhance the appreciation and enjoyment of these historic resources.

The Historic Courthouse Area Advisory Committee oversees the historic Hanover Courthouse area. This committee advises the Board of Supervisors and the County Administration on ways to enhance the area surrounding the Courthouse as a cultural and educational center.

Hanover County has been designated a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). This designation requires that the County maintain specific credentials for quality preservation programs and provides the County with a way to participate with state and national historic preservation programs, including grant programs, that enhance preservation efforts. The County has also been designated a Preserve America community. The Preserve America program is a partnership between federal, state, and local governments and individuals and organizations within the private sector to provide resources to develop local and regional heritage tourism programs.

## **THE GOALS**

- **Comprehensively preserve and protect Hanover County historic resources through regulation and incentives and to support these historic resources through interpretative and educational programs**
- **Enhance historic resources with a community-defined heritage tourism program that will provide a unique cultural experience for residents and tourists, and that will create opportunities for economic development**

## **THE MEANS**

Greater Understanding of Historical Context for resources within the County - The value of historic resources in the County can only be truly appreciated with an understanding of the time period in which the resource was established and how that resource has been utilized and modified over the course of time; therefore, an understanding of the context or a significant theme that influenced a historic resource is fundamental for effective preservation planning.

- In many cases, there are existing sources of information on historic resources in the County. Documents that accompanied previously compiled historic surveys provide the general historical context for surveyed sites; these documents should be referenced when evaluating the integrity of an historic resource, the perceived impact from new development, and when recommendations are made for inclusion of the site on local, state or national historic registries. In instances where existing sources do not provide adequate information on historic sites, it is recommended that further studies be conducted; the CLG program is a source that should be utilized when conducting additional studies.
- The Historic Commission should consider providing that individual members receive training and resources to develop an expertise on one or more theme, context or development period.
- The National Register of Historic Places, publication Bulletin 30 is the recognized standard for the assessment and documentation of rural historic landscapes that are eligible for register listing; Bulletin 40 was written to aid in the assessment and documentation of battlefield landscapes. The principles outlined in these documents should be applied to better understand the cultural landscapes that exist in Hanover County.
- DHR maintains that preservation surveys should include properties that are 50 or more years old. Preservation planning should be proactive by identifying neighborhoods and commercial development of the period encompassing the 1950's and 1960's which have maintained a high degree of integrity. In order to preserve the integrity of these places, an examination of the contemporary development trends and influences must be made in order to preserve these resources for future generations. Significant trends or building styles that are not over 50 years old should also be studied to determine the importance of these "newer" resources to the community and the need to develop polices and practices to preserve these resources.

Categorization of Historic Sites – With over 1300 surveyed sites in the County, there exists a need to categorize these sites to determine the appropriate amount of preservation focus. While all the sites that have been surveyed have significance, certain sites merit a more intense focus for preservation. Categorizing sites that are most important to the community and sites that have retained integrity to convey cultural significance is a proactive step to preservation planning. The Historic Commission should be a resource for recommending properties for inclusion in the appropriate categories.

- *Category 1*: This category should include properties or structures that have been designated as National Historic Landmarks (NHL) and sites that have been determined to be exceptional cultural resources. Properties identified as *Category 1* should be evaluated to determine whether they can serve as "anchors" for heritage tourism in Hanover County. As of 2006, three places in the County have been designated as a NHL: Hanover Courthouse,

Scotchtown, and Marlbourne. Properties that have been recognized as exceptional cultural resources include Hanover Tavern, Gaines Mill – Cold Harbor Battlefields, and Rural Plains. A preservation strategy should be developed for *Category 1* properties and structures, which should include the following:

- An evaluation of the historic landscape and a determination of those areas and viewsheds that are important to the retention of the historic setting of the property or structure;
  - The identification of segments of road corridors that can influence the cultural experience and consideration of regulatory provisions for segments of road corridors to preserve the cultural experience;
  - An evaluation of existing regulatory means and policies to determine whether they are sufficient to protect and preserve the historic setting, and consideration of additional regulatory provisions, such as the creation of an OHP, revisions to the regulations or boundaries of an existing OHP, and the creation of conservation easements;
  - Proper maintenance of historic resources is a priority; where appropriate, financial incentives should be utilized to encourage maintenance and to receive guarantees of preservation; and
  - The use of open space and historic easements where appropriate .
- *Category 2*: This category should include properties and districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, those determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Century Farms recognized by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, and battlefield sites which are not included in *Category 1* but which have been determined by the National Park Service to have a significant degree of integrity. As of 2006, 34 places have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and 19 Century Farms have been recognized. A preservation strategy should be developed for *Category 2* places, which should include the following:
    - An evaluation of the historic landscape and a determination of those areas and viewsheds that are important to the retention of the historic setting of the property or structure;
    - Mobilization of efforts to support those properties in the County that have been nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;
    - The use of resources from the DHR, the ARB, and the Historic Commission to conduct educational sessions with property owners, which shall include advice for the appropriate restoration and use of the property, a discussion of the availability of assistance through a listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the use of open space and historic easements, and consideration of other programs to assist in the incorporation of historic properties into a heritage tourism program;

- Application for the inclusion of the villages of Doswell and Beaverdam on the National Register of Historic Places and consideration of a comprehensive “rural village” preservation plan for the Hanover Courthouse, Beaverdam, Montpelier, and Doswell areas;
  - Use of the Overlay Preservation Districts as a means to encourage owner acceptance and to educate these owners as to the importance of their properties to the community at large and to notify them of available sources of assistance to maintain their properties;
  - The seeking of assistance from the National Park Service, Richmond National Battlefield Park, in the design and implementation of a battlefield resource protection plan for both Civil War and Revolutionary War sites;
  - The encouragement of proper maintenance of historic sites; where appropriate, financial incentives should be utilized to encourage maintenance and to receive guarantees of preservation; and
  - A review of *Category 2* properties in conjunction with the General Land Use Plan map to identify potential encroachment by future development.
- *Category 3*: This category should contain those surveyed resources or potential resources that are not included within *Category 1* or *Category 2*. Inclusion in *Category 3* is not a determination that the resource or potential resource is less valuable than the sites included in *Category 1* and *Category 2*; these places may not have had sufficient evaluation to determine their significance or integrity and may in fact, after evaluation, be classified as *Category 1* or *Category 2*. It must be recognized that, with over 1300 currently surveyed sites and the likely addition of more sites in the future, it is likely that many surveyed properties will be lost or have their integrity compromised. A preservation strategy should be developed for *Category 3* places, which should include the following:
    - The completion of an updated survey to identify those resources that have been lost, have become substantially compromised, or have become structurally unstable;
    - The establishment of a program to notify and educate property owners of the cultural and historical significance of their properties;
    - The encouragement of proper maintenance of historic sites; where appropriate, financial incentives should be utilized to encourage maintenance and to receive guarantees of preservation; and
    - The consideration of ways that the historic resource can be adapted to assimilate the resource into a changing landscape or setting that is consistent with the General Land Use designation while maintaining the character and significance of the resource to the greatest extent possible.

Resource Impact Evaluation – If a resource is not located within an OHP, protection of the resource is primarily achieved as the result of voluntary proffers made by applicants for a change in zoning for the property or through conditions imposed by the Board of Supervisors in connection with the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit or the granting of a

Special Exception. Criteria for evaluating zoning requests should be developed to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the historic landscape. All historic sites are unique and should be considered as such; evaluation criteria should be established to:

- Ensure that preservation goals and practices are integrated into the zoning application and development review processes
- Evaluate the resource category (as previously outlined), the historical context and relevant theme surrounding the historic resource to determine the most appropriate way to preserve the resource
- Encourage the dedication of open space or the conveyance of conservation easements for the historic resource and adjoining open space, and the assembly of open space and properties subject to a conservation easement so as to create a continued greenway
- Utilize architecture that complements the historic character of the resource
- Establish buffers that enhance the historic landscape and utilize compatible screening material (existing vegetation, appropriate walls or fences, supplemental native trees and hedgerows)
- Utilize site design that enhances views (such as the use of natural features, surface planes, building materials, and unobtrusive parking areas)
- Encourage appropriate materials and features on the new site that is sympathetic to the historic context if a historic structure is to be relocated

#### Additional Preservation Strategies

In addition to those identified above, the following strategies should be used where appropriate:

- Continued use of historic resource survey, including periodic updates of the survey;
- The allocation of resources to ensure that GIS and other technology capabilities are comprehensive and are being used effectively to assist preservation efforts;
- The review of existing zoning regulations that could have the unintended effect of discouraging preservation, such as regulations regarding adaptive reuse, the status and maintenance of non-conforming structures and uses, setback requirements, and lighting and landscape requirements;
- The development of criteria for cemetery documentation and the compilation of a list and description of cemeteries within the County; and
- The encouragement of methods to promote education on Hanover County's cultural heritage, including the possible appointment of a school system employee to serve on the Historic Commission and discuss methods to incorporate Hanover County history in school curriculum, the encouragement of youth participation in historic

stewardship (Hanover Youth Perspective), and the encouragement and promotion of festivals highlighting Hanover County heritage

Heritage Tourism - Heritage tourism has been defined as the traveling by individuals to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. Hanover County's vast array of cultural and historic resources provides an opportunity for economic benefits for the owners of these resources and the County as a whole. In pursuing heritage tourism opportunities, a balance must be maintained between the economic benefits to the property owner and the County and the preservation of the character of the resources.

The County has partnered with the Town of Ashland Office on Tourism to promote sites, activities, events, and tourism-related businesses including lodging, meals and retail establishments within the Town and the County. The County also works with the Metro Richmond Convention and Visitor's Bureau to identify and promote opportunities in the County and to coordinate activities within the County with activities occurring throughout the Richmond region. The proximity to the capital of Virginia and to important sites in our Nation's history, from the pre-Revolutionary War period, through the Revolutionary War period, through the period during the Civil War, to today, affords great opportunity, but also requires that Hanover County businesses be in a position to make use of these opportunities. Without the means to take full advantage of these opportunities, a significant portion of the economic benefit from heritage tourism will go to other jurisdictions in the region.

A comprehensive heritage tourism program requires input from all sectors of the community on expectations for heritage tourism and direction regarding preservation strategies for historic resources. A strong public-private working relationship is essential for the implementation of a successful program. The following means should be considered in developing and implementing a viable heritage tourism program:

- Review zoning regulations for provisions that inhibit heritage tourism opportunities and consider amendments to zoning regulations that facilitate heritage tourism, including:
  - Provisions that would allow for adaptive-reuse of historic structures, the availability of public tours, the adoption of design standards that do not detract from the cultural experience, and the promotion of destinations that provide entertainment and educational opportunities;
  - The development of properties that are conveniently located to provide support services for historic and cultural resources, such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, gift shops, and cultural recreation facilities. For example, the rural villages of Beaverdam, Montpelier, and Doswell and locations along the Civil War

Trails route and near Revolutionary and Civil War battlefield sites can be developed to provide appropriate support services for these resources; and

- Provisions that encourage heritage tourism and agri-tourism in connection with the County’s agricultural resources, such as overnight accommodations, markets/gift shops, and recreational farming experiences.
- The tourist potential of Kings Dominion and the future State Fair property located in Caroline County should be utilized to complement the County’s cultural tourism program. The Route 30 corridor should be enhanced to provide visitors with an attractive tourist destination in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing and which provides modern services and recreational activities.
- The County should explore ways to benefit from public-private financial incentives offered to Hanover County as a Preserve America Community.

### Bicycle Routes

A component of the Heritage Tourism plan will be to include development of bicycle facilities. Bicycle tours have been proven to be a popular means to view historic resources. Several Virginia municipalities have bicycle routes designed around historic sites or events; places such as Williamsburg, Charlottesville, Albemarle County Alexandria, Yorktown, Lancaster County and many others. Various bicycle routes advocated by the Virginia Tourism Authority are centered on historic events and locations such as Lee’s Retreat. With Hanover County’s vast number of historic sites, bicycle facilities to these resources would provide additional tourist interest in Hanover County.

The existing bicycle routes in Hanover County consist of US Bicycle Routes 1 and 76. As a portion of the transportation plan (GOAL 2), any improvements along these designated roadways are to have bicycle facilities included. Additional roadways are selected to be possible/ future bicycle routes. The additional routes incorporate a variety of Hanover County’s most popular historic sties. Possible/future routes were chosen based upon input from a local cycling group, the Historical Commission, and Hanover County Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Planning.