

## INTRODUCTION

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On June 22, 1993, Public Act 69, an Act to designate certain highways within Michigan as Heritage Routes, was signed into law. The Act stipulates that within 60 days after its effective date, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shall submit recommendations to the Commission regarding uniform criteria and procedures for the identification of Heritage Routes.

The department's recommendations follow. They have three major components: 1) **Selection Criteria**, 2) **Maintenance and Design Guidelines**, and 3) **Procedures for Designating Heritage Routes**. The latter includes recommendations regarding the nomination process, the approval process, and revisions to the system.

### 1. SELECTION CRITERIA

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#### GENERAL CRITERIA

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Michigan is endowed with hundreds of miles of highways, roads and streets that have scenic, recreational, or historic significance. By law, however, this program pertains only to state highways. Even then, personal preferences make it difficult to select routes having the greatest significance. Criteria have therefore been established in order to evaluate the candidate routes as objectively as possible. The general criteria for Heritage Routes are:

**Local Support** - The application must show evidence of significant public support, including that of affected local governments, landowners, and constituent groups. Resolutions of support from county or local governments with jurisdiction in the area encompassing the proposed Heritage Routes, will demonstrate that support. Applicants for historic routes must demonstrate coordination with the Bureau of History, Department of State.

**Management Plan** - The nominating party will provide a concise plan for the protection, preservation and enhancement of the resources on which the Heritage Route determination will be based. Historic routes require a promotional plan in addition to a management plan.

**Logical Section** - The highway must have a logical beginning and ending to its Heritage Route section. The route must be a reasonable length to view the resource(s), as well as for signing and maintenance purposes.

In addition, the MDOT will evaluate the suitability of the candidate route for designation as scenic, recreational, or historic using the following specific criteria. These criteria will be addressed in detail in a manual being prepared for local agency participation in the Heritage Route selection process.

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## SPECIFIC CRITERIA

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### SCENIC

**Regional Attributes** - The road should provide travelers with a substantial opportunity to view and appreciate the distinctive features of the region which it traverses. The MDOT will utilize the information in the narrative description to determine the degree to which each candidate road satisfies this criterion.

**Visual Quality** - The road, immediate right-of-way, and views from it, should exhibit "exceptional compositional merit." The MDOT will utilize the data collected in the Roadside Inventory to determine the degree to which each candidate road satisfies this criterion. Emphasis shall be placed on:

*Uniqueness:* Extremely spectacular.

*Vividness:* Contrasting landscape elements. Diversity.

*Intactness:* Extent to which the landscapes free from visual encroachment and disruption, either natural or man-made.

*Unity:* Measure of how well the landscape elements join together to form a single, harmonious scene.

*Viewshed:* Concern for not just how scenic the road is, but also the view from the road.

**Adjacent Land Use** - Adjacent commercial and industrial land uses are not compatible with scenic designation. Those areas currently in commercial or industrial zones, or otherwise designated for these uses, must be excluded from the section of highway designated as scenic.

### RECREATIONAL

**Trip Purpose** - A predominant use of the highway must be for recreation or tourism. Evidence must be provided that a substantial portion of the traffic is related to these uses.

**Areas/Activities Served** - The highway must demonstrably serve a recreation site or

area. It should have wide ranging or exemplary recreational opportunities or facilities. The highway may also serve as a link between recreational or cultural features with a common theme. An inventory of the recreational opportunities and facilities must be included in the application.

**Roadside Environment** - The highway roadside must possess those aesthetic, ecological, environmental and cultural elements that uniquely distinguish the particular recreational site or area. The roads should blend with their surroundings and be compatible with the traffic needing access to these recreational areas. While not necessarily truly scenic, the route should reflect the recreational nature of the area while not being overly commercialized or developed.

### HISTORIC

**National Register Quality** - The proposed historic route must contain historic resources that are either listed in the National Register of Historic Places or eligible for listing in the National Register. Routes containing a National Historic Landmark will receive extra consideration toward designation.

**Number of Resources** - There must be a concentration of historic attractions on a route. For example, a route may have one or more historic districts, a number of individual resources, or a combination of districts and individual properties along a logical segment of highway.

**Visibility** - The historic resources along the highway must be visible from the road. In the case of a historic district, a substantial portion of the district must lie adjacent to the highway.

**Setting** - The route segment must retain an overall setting and character that complements the historic resources.