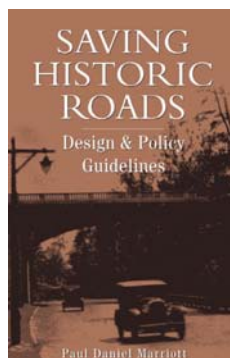


SAVING HISTORIC ROADS: DESIGN AND POLICY GUIDELINES



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ABSTRACT

In 1993, when the author began examining the issues and threats facing one parkway, he became aware of the engineering legal, and social issues facing historic roads across the country. His research culminated in a policy paper presented in 1994 to the engineering community at an AASHTO conference. The paper, which identified the need for research on the preservation of historic roads, resulted in the National Task Force for Historic Roads (NTFHR) being established and a grant to prepare this book. Although the book is written more for historic road advocates than highway engineers, it is still useful to the practitioner.



Chapter 1: Introduction. The purpose of the book is to assist in identifying and preserving historic roads which are in danger across the United States. It is time to focus on preserving, maintaining, and protecting our rich history of road development. The book presents options for preserving historic roads. The chapter ends with 25 questions to ask as you start your journey into preserving your historic road.

Chapter 2: Historic Roads Defined. NTFHR identifies three types of historic roads: aesthetic routes, engineered routes, and cultural routes. Aesthetic routes include parkways and park roads designed for leisure and recreation, but not the fastest or most direct route. Engineered routes are those designed for the movement of people, goods and services where speed, safety and economy determined the design. Cultural routes are those that have evolved over time (such as Native American trails and post roads) without the intensive engineering and design associated with aesthetic and engineered routes. In addition, there are multi-category roads that fit into more than one category.

Chapter 3: What You Need to Know is an in-depth chapter that introduces the three issues threatening historic roads – safety, liability and ignorance – and the four threats to the integrity of historic roads – realignment, destruction, replacement, and regional threats. Because many historic roads are still in use

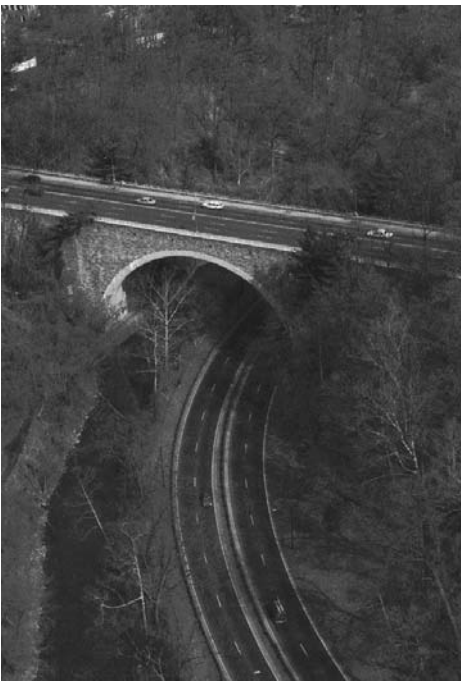


today it is difficult to recognize their historic value. One must recognize that safety is of paramount importance, but keep in mind there is more than one way to address safety concerns. Fear of tort liability risk and not understanding the historic value of a road are factors threatening the integrity of historic roads. Realignment can be as simple as a lane shift to lessen a sharp curve or as drastic as a bypass usually in response to a real safety problem, but remember this could be to a *perceived* problem. Destruction can be either complete or incremental over a period of years. Replacement of an historic road needs to take care to replace roadway and roadside elements with like materials, construction and forms in their original locations. There is a discussion of context, (the historic setting) and integrity (the quality of the context). There is a wealth of information on law and policy regarding the determination for historic preservation, federal transportation programs, and criteria to meet in designing roads.

Chapter 4: The AASHTO Green Book. This chapter summarizes the elements and criteria used in designing roads as presented in a *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, commonly known as the “Green Book,” published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The chapter notes that the Green Book *recommends* guidelines that become a *standard* only when adopted by a state transportation department. Keep in mind, there is flexibility in Green Book guidelines.



Chapter 5: What You Need to Do is research the issues, determine the rationale behind the proposed changes, and identify the players. Evaluate your historic road to determine if it really is historic, then define the issues facing your historic road, be ready to respond to specific proposed changes or threats to the integrity of the road, and define an appropriate course of action. Now is the time to determine the rationale behind the proposed project that may impact your historic road. Is it a real safety issue that needs to be addressed? You need to evaluate if the rationale is legitimate, and present creative solutions to address preservation. Be ready to articulate the preservation issue. There are preservation-based strategies and project-based strategies that can be used in roadway design.



Chapter 6: Save Your Historic Road focuses on determining the tools and strategies to save your historic road that can range anywhere from community action to legal action, remembering that the simplest and most direct solutions are usually the best. Do your research. Look for alternative solutions based on similar roads around the country and the flexibility of the Green Book guidelines. Build a strong case documenting the history of the road. Use the planning process to ensure transportation decisions are being made in a comprehensive manner. The chapter outlines a number of different tools to gain support for preservation while addressing roadway deficiencies.

Chapter 7: Case Studies. Six case studies of historic road success stories are outlined with photos and diagrams illustrating some of the creative methods by which historic roads can be preserved. The case studies demonstrate the diversity of issues affecting historic roads and the creative and innovative approaches taken. They demonstrate a careful effort to look beyond traditional preservation and understand the other forces at play impacting the preservation



of historic roads. This is a most practical chapter for the highway designer. *Appendices*. There is a wealth of information in the appendices to help guide the reader on resources available, as follows:

- Appendix A: Roads Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- Appendix B: Approved Alternative Guardrail, Guardwall, and Bridge Rail Designs
- Appendix C: US State, Commonwealth, and Territorial Historic Preservation Offices

A glossary of applicable terms and abbreviations and acronyms, found at the back of the book, are helpful tools.

SUMMARY

The book is well-written and beautifully illustrated introduction to the issues associated with historic roads. Although it is targeted to the preservation audience, it is still useful to the transportation planner or designer.

KEY WORDS

Applicable Project Delivery Stages: Administration, Planning, Design

Applicable Transportation Professionals: Administrators, Highway Engineers, Planners, Landscape Architects, Historians

Applicable Transportation Modes: Vehicular, Transit

Transportation Topics: Alignment, Arterial, Clear Zone, Collector, Context, Cultural Route, Design Speed, Driver Expectancy, Engineered Route, Guardrail, Horizontal Alignment, Integrity, Lane Width, Local Road, Median, National Register of Historical Places, Parkway, Posted Speed, Right-of-Way, Safety, Shoulder, Sight Distance, Standards, Vertical Alignment, Volume