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DEVELOPMENT REPORT

PLANNING DIVISION

IOWA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

MARCH 1968

IOWA MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESOURCE

A PRELIMINARY PLANNING REPORT

It is the purpose of this preliminary planning report to present for review and consideration some thoughts relating to the future development of Iowa's potential resource related to the Mississippi River Frontage. This is in connection with planning Iowa's segment of the Mississippi River Parkway which is one element of the total development problem.

On the recent bus tour of the full length of the Iowa frontage two major impressions were generated. The first was the relative inaccessibility of much of the area adjacent to the river, and the other was the intensity and conglomeration of the land use at those points where there is accessibility. While it is the current state of difficult access that is being generally deplored, and which is the focus of development interest, it can be reasoned that the resource itself has been preserved by this factor. If this is true, it follows that any program to provide access without first providing essential land use control would be extremely detrimental to the realization of the ultimate full value of the resource.

To circumvent this danger, it is essential that careful and comprehensive planning be done prior to making any public capital

expenditure which might attract private venture capital to the area. The planning process, to be productive, must first provide for taking a careful inventory of the present situation. From this basic data a comprehensive plan must be prepared, employing every professional discipline necessary to assure optimum aesthetic and functional development. The implementation of the plan will depend upon several factors. First the plan must be generally accepted by those immediately concerned and by the public in general. If it is acceptable, it will require legislation establishing the means of governing the plan and providing the necessary authority. It must provide the maximum possible inducement to venture capital from the private sector if it is to develop into a genuine benefit to the Iowa economy. Rigid land use control is the basic minimum protection needed by the major investor. A general knowledge of the scope and timing of the public investment will also be needed.

At the present time, the initiative for development efforts rests with the Iowa State Highway Commission and the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission, neither of which is staffed or funded for this additional planning effort. It seems that the first goal of these early planning efforts must be to provide the Iowa General Assembly (through the Governor) with a basis for the State's entering into this development venture. This could be done by the Division of Planning of the Iowa State Highway Commission.

It would be desirable to provide the legislators with a preliminary procedural report, outlining the full potential of long-term public investment in such a venture. It should make recommendations on the philosophy to be followed and the outline of planning procedure to be followed. It should be the objective of the procedural report to obtain authorization and funding of the inventory and plan development during the 1969-1970 biennium. The initial implementation of the plan, if approved by the 1971 General Assembly would begin in 1971. The procedural report should be endorsed by both the Highway and Parkway Commissions and other State and local government agencies and interest groups before being submitted to the legislature.

Along with the preparation of the "Preliminary Procedural Report" to be submitted to the next legislature, another of the limited actions that can be taken now is placement of the "Great River Road" entirely under State control. It is presumed that this can be done by administrative action on the part of the Iowa State Highway Commission. This would tend to establish a proprietary interest by the State on the full river frontage and might be useful if other State controls are to be advanced in the future. It should be made clear to the respective counties that the State's interest is in route continuity and future capital improvements resulting may not involve the specific road section now bearing the route designation.

THE GREAT RIVER ROAD DEVELOPMENT IN IOWA

The concept of a scenic river road along the Mississippi River resulted in the establishment of the Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission in 1939. This Commission has the responsibility to plan a scenic parkway along the Mississippi River. The purpose of the parkway is to connect historic sites, national parks, forests, wildlife, and recreational areas located along the river. The Mississippi River Parkway Commission in 1949 with the cooperation of the Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service prepared a feasibility study of establishing a parkway along the river and as a result, Congress, in 1954 established the Great River Road. The Bureau of Public Roads has prepared two reports on the Iowa portion of the Great River Road. The latest, the 1963 report, outlined a detailed location, right-of-way, and other needs for the Great River Road.

The purpose of a scenic river road is to provide a change in pace from what a person ordinarily encounters. The Great River Road should be designed to serve the recreation bound traveler. This traveler very probably has a boat or trailer behind his car as he looks for a change in pace. Recreation travel has been an increasingly large feature of American life. This form of pleasure was clearly outlined in the scenic road study of 1966. The availability of a trip on the river road for recreation is shown in that 979,000 people live within one hours driving time and 2,173,000

people live within two hours of driving time of the river road located in Iowa. This number of people is based on the 1960 population census and does not consider the completion of our proposed Freeway and Expressway System.

The criteria for the Great River Road should include partial or complete control of access as needed to preserve the route. The protection of the scenic corridor should be either through purchase or scenic easement. The integrated development of scenic, historical, recreational, and geographical resources that exist along the corridor by the responsible agencies. This development should include facilities for the interpretation of these features and other public useful facilities as necessary. The proximity to the river should be close for visual viewing most of the time. The proximity for physical use to be available in adequate amount. The geometrics should be such as to discourage commercial travel. This can be accomplished by the design speed selected. A design speed should be lower than presently used on a primary or farm to market system. This means sharper horizontal curves and steeper grades. There should be a sufficient number of turnouts and scenic overlooks to encourage the drivers to stop frequently and enjoy the view. The surface should be paved. The discouragement of truck travel could result in a lower type pavement being perfectly adequate for the passenger cars.

The presently designated Great River Road obviously does not

function in this manner. There are, however, selected portions that can serve with some further development. There are also portions of the present designation which could function as connectors. These portions of the presently designated river road are scattered on the primary and county road systems. The purpose of the connectors is readily apparent with an example. The connection of the rural portion of the river road from north of Dubuque to the rural portion south of Dubuque requires a connector through this urban area. These connectors obviously cannot function as a scenic road but they are still a vital part and provide a service to the system. The identification of these segments will take much more study. The results to be expected from these studies can be briefly illustrated by taking one county for an analysis.

The location of the presently designated river road in Allamakee County is shown on the attached map. This route begins at the Minnesota State line in New Albin and follows Iowa 82 into Lansing. This route of Iowa 82 is satisfactorily located to be included into the river road system. The river road at Lansing leaves the primary system and travels on a county road near the river for about 2 miles and then turns inland and stays away from the river until it is about two and one half miles north of Harpers Ferry where it again comes back near the river. The route follows close to the river until it joins Iowa 364 in Harpers Ferry and follows Iowa 364 to a point approximately three quarters mile north of the junction

of Iowa 13. At this point the route follows the county road for a short distance to the bluffs above the river and then joins Iowa 13 about 2 miles north of the entrance of Effigy Mound National Monument.

The Bureau of Public Roads report in 1963 proposed a route along the river from New Albin to Harpers Ferry. This route then followed Iowa 364 to about three quarters of a mile north of Iowa 13 junction and then turns to the bluffs overlooking the river to just north of Effigy Mound National Monument where it joins Iowa 13. The location in the Bureau Report is shown on the attached map.

The location proposed by the Planning Division of the Iowa State Highway Commission is a composite of the above two. The route from New Albin to two miles south of Lansing is compatible with the other two studies. The route then climbs from the inland side of the bluffs to the top and basically stays on top of the bluffs for three miles. The route drops down to cross small drainage areas that split the bluffs. These could be crossed in some cases by an arch or by some other aesthetically pleasing structure. The route then comes down to near the river and follows the route proposed by the Bureau of Public Roads to the Effigy Mound entrance.

The presently designated route is impassable at some locations for much of the year. The route is also of limited scenic value for a river road when it is located inland two or three miles. The county road north of Harpers Ferry needs complete reconstruction. The Bureau of Public Roads proposal along the river offers limited

opportunity to view broad reaches of the river. The route does not offer physical access to the river since it is on the side of the bluff and a railroad track is between the proposed road and the river. The narrow restricted area between the railroad tracks and the solid rock bluff provides limited opportunity for scenic turnouts or overlooks.

The route proposed by the Division of Planning provides the opportunity to view broad reaches of the river and several excellent areas for scenic turnouts and overlooks are also available. It more importantly provides a change of pace within itself. The change of pace proceeding from New Albin south is provided by being down along the river between the bluff and the railroad tracks, along the river in Lansing, and the next change is climbing to the top of the bluffs south of Lansing. The route then comes back down along the bottom of the bluff overlooking the pool above the Lynxville Dam (pool nine). The route then climbs to the top of the bluffs south of Harpers Ferry and back down to the entrance of the Effigy Mound National Monument.

The complete development of a scenic river road is certainly not the responsibility of the Highway Commission. The Highway Commission's responsibility is obviously limited to providing the roadway and the scenic easement related to the roadway. The development of the scenic overlook turnouts, historical sites, geological facts must be developed by other agencies. These agencies

logically are the State Conservation Commission, the County Conservation Boards, and other agencies that are interested in the development of the river. The opportunities for the development of a scenic river road are getting fewer and fewer as the river is developed for other uses. The county selected for initial review, Allamakee, is of course relatively undeveloped, the further one proceeds south along the river the more intense becomes the industrial and commercial development. Thence more limited opportunities to protect the scenic corridor and provide a recreational type of road. The first step should be a complete study of the route, designating those portions of the primary and the county road systems that should be included in the river road and also designating the new portions that must be constructed.

The attached tables give a breakdown of costs and miles of various types of road systems in Allamakee County. The total river road is approximately 358 miles long which indicates the magnitude of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following six recommendations are made with the hope of developing an outstanding scenic river road in Iowa.

1. The development of the Great River Road will require allocation of additional funds from sources other than the road user. The present Road Use Tax Fund is incapable of financing the pressing needs of the roads and streets in Iowa now without diversion of funds to another program.

2. The development of the river road must recognize the present commercial and industrial development along the river. This recognition requires that certain sections of roads and streets must serve as connectors. These connectors must serve all traffic needs which means the mixing of recreational travel with other cars and trucks. The connectors would be built to primary road standards to serve this mixed traffic.
3. The full development of a seven mile "seedling section" should be undertaken. This development should be in an outstanding scenic area. The development should include not only the road, but the overlooks, camping areas, historical, and recreational developments as well. It would show just what the concept of the river road is at this time. This total development of the "seedling section" would serve two major purposes. It would provide excellent cost data to project total development costs of the river road in Iowa. It would give the public an opportunity to use and evaluate a scenic parkway. A suggested area for a "seedling section" would be on new location between Lansing and Harpers Terry.
4. The total development of the river road should be coordinated by one agency of State Government. This would provide a central area of responsibility and help insure an uniform development to a pre-determined goal. The development of the road system would logically be the responsibility of the Iowa State Highway

Commission. The Highway Commission with its statewide oriented planning, development, and operations has the staff resources to do the job on this special road system. These resources would aid the other cooperating agencies of the State.

5. A detailed study should be conducted to determine which primary-secondary roads and city streets should be made part of the system. This study would identify which portions of the presently designated roads would serve as part of the final river road development. This study would also identify those facilities which must serve as connectors. The example of Allamakee County used in this report indicates the type of study recommended at this time.
6. The development of detailed plans from Dubuque north should be initiated. The area north of Dubuque is relatively undeveloped. The development of detailed plans would provide a chance to develop this river resource as soon as money can be made available.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER FRONTAGE RESOURCE

SUGGESTED TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOR A PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL REPORT

- A. Background and History of "Great River Road"
(Abstract of development efforts to date and review of current status)
- B. Potential of the Mississippi River Frontage as a State Resource
(A statement indicating what the legislator might expect to generate in gross product for the State by inducing venture capital investment through State initiative.)
- C. A Typical Comprehensive Planning Approach
(A sketchy planning layout of a specific short section of the frontage to convey the idea of the advantages of an aesthetic - functional plan implemented with land use control).
- D. Recommendations
(Provide recommendations for organizing, staffing and funding the comprehensive planning process leading to future development of the resource).

OUTLINE FOR
SUGGESTED ORDER OF DEVELOPMENT

I. Inventory - Determine Current Situation

A. Sub-divide into Planning Section

B. Determine Current Land Use

1. Urban
2. Agricultural
3. Transportation (Rail - Air - Water - Highway)
4. Industrial
5. Recreational
6. Strip Residential

C. Prepare Exhibits (Maps - Photographs)

D. Identify Jurisdiction and Ownership

II. Plan Development

A. Suggested Land Use

1. Urban
2. Scenic - Agricultural
3. Transportation
4. Industrial
5. Recreational
6. Strip Residential

B. Suggested Road and Access Plan

1. Principal Road Location Recommendation (Parkway)
2. Access Roads

III. Implementation of Plan

A. Legislation

1. Establish Continuing Governing Body
2. Establish Zoning Authority
3. Establish Funding Provisions

B. Administration

1. Policy to be by Governing Body
2. Administration by Director and Professional Staff.
3. Coordination Among Agencies
 - a. State
 - b. Federal
 - c. Local
4. Establish Public Capital Investment Priorities and Program State Resources.

1966 SCENIC ROADS REPORT - ALLAMAKEE

	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL LENGTH	NO. OVERLOOKS
EXISTING PRIMARY	18.11	0.79	18.90 Miles	5
EXISTING SECONDARY	13.73	1.17	14.90 Miles	2
NEW LOCATION	2.00	0	2.00 Miles	0
TOTAL	33.84	1.96	35.80 Miles	7

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS RECOMMENDATIONS - ALLAMAKEE

	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL LENGTH	NO. OVERLOOKS
EXISTING PRIMARY	15.20	0.79	15.99 Miles	5
EXISTING SECONDARY	7.85	1.10	8.95 Miles	2
NEW LOCATION	10.10	1.10	11.20 Miles	2
TOTAL	33.15	2.99	36.14 Miles	9

OVERLOOKS, INFO. CENTERS, PARKS, ETC.

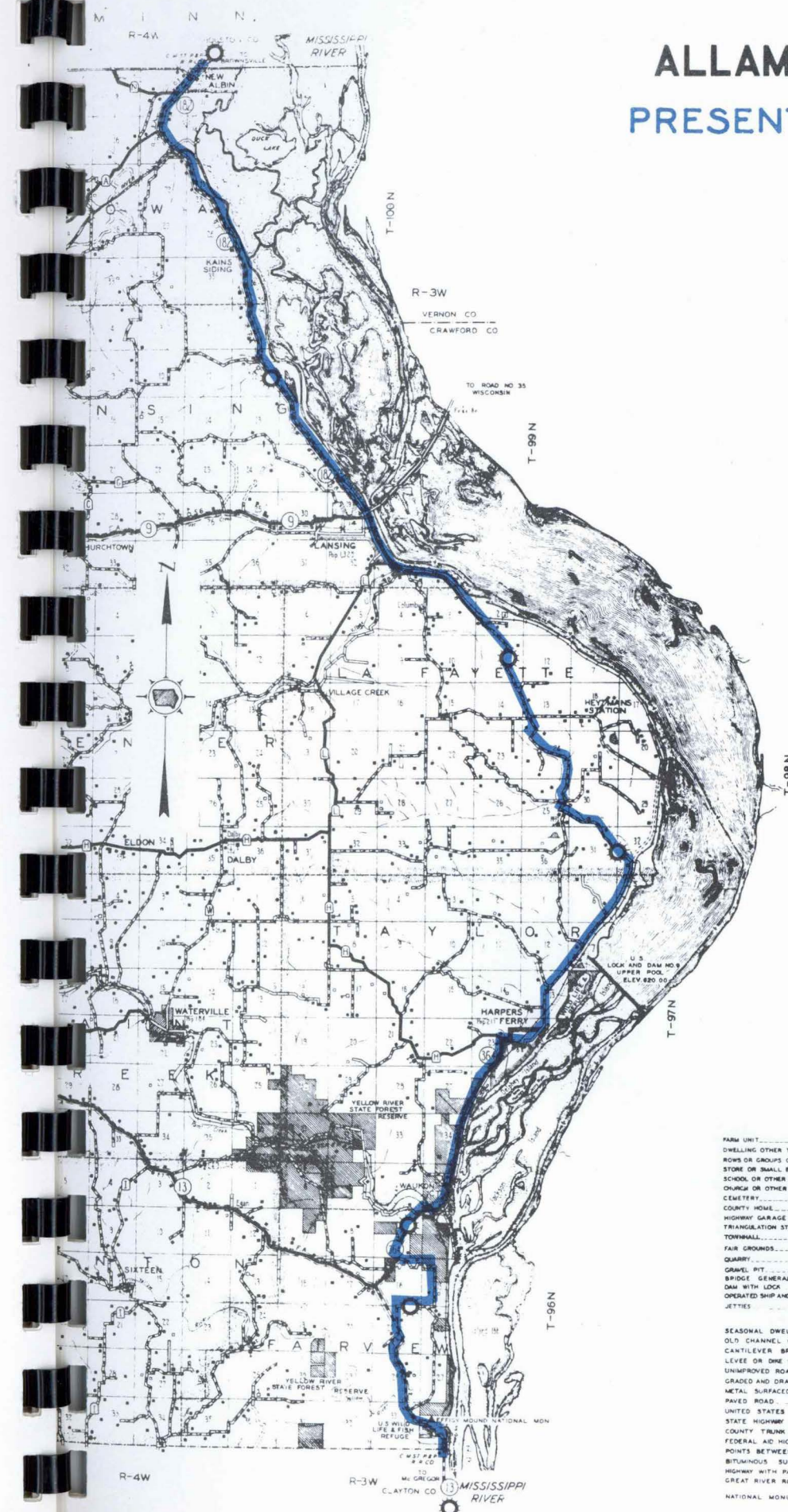
1966 SCENIC ROADS REPORT

Mileposts	Location	Present Road System
0-.50	1. State Line Entrance Features	Primary
	2. Waterfront Facilities @ Lansing (Existing)	Secondary
	3. Waterfront Facilities @ Harpers Ferry (Existing)	Primary
	4. Yellow River Forest Recreation Area (Existing)	Primary
4-5	5. Fish Farm Mounds (Existing)	Primary
30.2-32.3	6. Parking Overlook	Secondary
	7. Effigy Mound Nat. Monument	Primary

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS REPORT

0-1	1. State Line Info. Center	New
1-2	2. Existing Parking & Picnic Area So. of New Albin	Primary
4-5	3. Fish Farm Mounds Historical Site	Primary
11-12	4. Mt. Hosmer City Park & Overlook @ Lansing (No. of Harpers Ferry)	Primary
24-25	5. Overlook of Lock No. 9 & Wildlife Refuge	Secondary
29-30	6. Possible Parking Pulloffs No. of Waukon Jct.	Primary
32-33	7. Overlook & Forestry Info. So. of Waukon Jct.	New
33-34	8. Day Use Area @ Loester Heights	Secondary
35-36	9. Effigy Mound Nat. Monument	Primary

ALLAMAKEE COUNTY PRESENT RIVER ROAD



LEGEND		IN USE	NOT IN USE
FARM UNIT			
DWELLING OTHER THAN FARM			
ROWS OR GROUPS OF DWELLINGS			
STORE OR SMALL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT			
SCHOOL OR OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION			
CHURCH OR OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION			
CEMETERY			
COUNTY HOME			
HIGHWAY GARAGE			
TRIANGULATION STATION			
TOWNHALL			
FAIR GROUNDS			
QUARRY			
GRAVEL PIT			
BRIDGE GENERAL			
DAM WITH LOCK			
OPERATED SHIP AND BARGE LINES ON NATURAL STREAMS			
JETTIES			
SEASONAL DWELLING			
OLD CHANNEL OF STREAM			
CANTILEVER BRIDGE			
LEVEE OR DIKE WITH ROAD			
UNIMPROVED ROAD (RURAL)			
GRADED AND DRAINED ROAD			
METAL SURFACED ROAD			
PAVED ROAD			
UNITED STATES HIGHWAY			
STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM			
COUNTY TRUNK SYSTEM			
FEDERAL AID HIGHWAY SYSTEM			
POINTS BETWEEN WHICH DISTANCES ARE MEASURED			
BITUMINOUS SURFACED ROAD			
HIGHWAY WITH PARTIAL CONTROL OF ACCESS			
GREAT RIVER ROAD			
NATIONAL MONUMENT			

ALLAMAKEE COUNTY

B. P. R. RIVER ROAD

