

## *Step 1: Assess Your Potential*

### **Mapping Your Assets**

Once you have completed a written inventory of your cultural heritage tourism assets, asset mapping is the next step to help you see how the attractions and visitor services can be combined into a cultural heritage tourism experience that makes sense for you—a cultural corridor, a scenic byway, a walking tour or any number of other tourism products.



By plotting attractions and visitor services on a map, participants will be able to visualize where the strengths and weaknesses of their area lie. In order to be successful, you must be able to provide a critical mass of attractions and services to attract visitors and keep them in your area.

### **Advance Preparation**

Use the *Share Your Heritage* assessment forms to create an inventory of your cultural heritage tourism assets. Keep in mind that some assets may be ready to go, while others will need work before they can reach their full potential for cultural heritage tourism. You need to identify both to plan effectively.

A visual inventory of your region is also a useful tool. Take slides or photos of the region, documenting both the best and the worst of your area. The visual inventory is especially important if your region covers a large area, and if not everyone in the mapping exercise is familiar with the entire region.

Gathering existing guides for your area can also be a helpful resource. Look for brochures, books and other materials that list the things to see as well as the places to stay, eat, shop and take care of other needs while traveling.

### **What You Need:**

- Map that shows the entire area in a large scale to make it easier to map assets (ideally one per person, though 3-4 can work). For areas where the topography is part of the area's appeal, a U.S. Geological Survey topographical map will work best.
- Tracing paper large enough to cover the map
- Colored pens or markers
- Tape and/or pins (to post finished map and overlays)
- Completed inventory forms (one copy per participant)
- Photos or slides of the region
- Informational materials about your region

## Let's Go!

### **Step 1: Getting Organized**

If you are in a large group, divide up into teams of approximately 10-15 participants. Be sure that each team includes individuals who are familiar with the area (including individuals who have completed the inventory forms and visual analysis for the area). If the group is not familiar with mapping exercises, provide an introduction to show how mapping will be used. Be sure that everyone is familiar with the key.

### **Step 2: The Big Picture**

The first step is to draw the boundaries of the area that you are working with. While this sounds simple, it can often be challenging. If you are looking at a scenic drive, take into account not only the road itself, but what travelers can see from the road. Also, consider attractions that you would like to include in your efforts that may be outside of a community or off of a main road. Be sure to have lots of tracing paper on hand, as you may need to try several versions before the team can agree on the boundaries for your project.

### **Step 3: Mapping Attractions and Services**

Divide the team and have smaller teams work on mapping attractions and visitor services on tracing paper. These pieces of tracing paper can be used as “overlays”—they can be laid one on top of the other over the map to give a complete picture of where your assets are.

### **Step 4: Strengths/Weaknesses**

Using a clean sheet of tracing paper, have each small group use a GREEN pen to identify the greatest strengths that their area has to offer. Then use a RED pen to identify any problematic areas in your region. You will find that sometimes areas will have both positive and negative characteristics, so don't be surprised to see both red and green in the same place.

### **Step 5: Discussion**

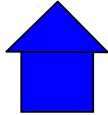
Now that your assets are laid out visually on the map, take time to talk about what the mapping has told you. Where do you see critical clusters of attractions and services? Are there areas that do not offer attractions or services for visitors, and how will that affect the appeal of your region as a cultural heritage tourism destination? What additional attractions or services could strengthen what your region has to offer? How can the attractions and services be packaged to provide the greatest appeal for potential visitors? For the areas with the greatest strengths, how can you be sure that these positive characteristics are safely preserved for the future? For areas with weaknesses, what could be done to minimize or overcome those weaknesses?

# ASSET MAP KEY

**POINTS** of interest. The following specific kinds of places can be identified with the symbols listed below. Using different colors for each helps to make them even more visible.



ATTRACTION



LODGING



RESTAURANT



SHOPPING



OTHER SERVICES (BANK, GAS STATION)

## **AREAS** of interest

If you need to identify an entire area rather than a single point, draw a line to indicate the boundaries of that area.

## **VIEWS** of interest

Certain locations provide an ideal place to take in a scenic view. To identify this type of asset, make a dot where the traveler should be standing, and draw a line and an arrow indicating the direction that the view is in. To add another dimension to this, use green arrows to indicate scenic vistas and a red arrow to indicate any negative views.

*This exercise was modified from "Mapping Special Places" in the O Say Can You See: A Visual Awareness Toolkit for Communities manual created by Scenic America*



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