



Designation of Historic Districts as Gateways

Background:

At the April 9, 2003 Gateways Network Working Group meeting, the Working Group clarified criteria for designating historic districts as Gateway sites. These criteria complement and supplement the basic criteria and characteristics listed for Gateway sites.

Designation Criteria for Historic Districts:

The following criteria will be used to determine whether a historic district may qualify as a Gateway Site.

Character of Resource:

- 1.) An eligible district comprises a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. An eligible district is a destination unto itself which possesses a distinctive sense of place, the history and significance of which is not already being interpreted by a designated Gateway site, regional information center, or hub. Most individual structures in a district should contribute to this sense of place, contributing to the sense of cohesiveness and homogeneity of the area.
- 2.) The history and significance of the district must be demonstrated to be rooted in the direct relationship between this place and the Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries, or major tributaries in the upper watershed. The district should provide direct, physical public access to Bay-related resources.
- 3.) An eligible district should include as few intrusions as possible and should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent, or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant. District boundaries should be defined accordingly.

Interpretation:

- 1.) The district must provide dawn to dusk interpretation opportunities regarding the history and significance of the district for visitors. At the least, this interpretation should consist of signage and/or readily available collateral materials such as walking tour brochures which convey not only site-specific information but explain the district's Bay-related context. The district's interpretive program should be coordinated by a single management entity and should be based on scholarly research rather than amusing anecdote. This entity may be an instrument of local government or a non-profit organization.

Resource Protection:

- 1.) The district must be protected by enforceable historic property and/or cultural landscape stewardship mechanisms such as an historic area zoning ordinance or an

easement mechanism. (e.g. a National Register district alone would not qualify since there is no protection direct protection associated with that designation)

Overall Management:

- 1.) The protection and interpretation of the district must be overseen and coordinated by a governmental or non profit management entity which serves the public interest by protecting those historic and cultural resources that have been determined to be important to the character of the community.