Case Study: Nevis

Scenic Byway Community Design - Nevis

Case #2 - Nevis

Description of community,

Nevis is an interesting community residing within the Red Cedar forest at the threshold of the Paul Bunyan State Forest. The downtown precinct developed off of the main road HWY.34 creating an opportunity to try and connect the downtown more directly to the Lake Country Scenic Byway. The HWY. 34 corridor passing through Nevis is undefined and relatively open, producing only views of the Lumber Mill.

Where it is located on the Byway

Nevis is located east of Grand Rapids along Hwy.34. Seated at the head of lake Belle Taine it becomes a water trailhead connecting the Mantrap chain of lakes. The town has an existing network of “Green” Resources which could easily be converted from isolated patches to a more complete system using the Lake Country Scenic Byway as an armature.

Why this community was chosen

Nevis is a great location to do this study because it exhibits the potential to become a center of interest for residents and visitors. As seen in the Osage plan, Nevis has many amenities that can be organized as part of the regional recreation system. According to the LTM model Nevis will have development pressure. The main idea here is to accentuate projected growth by increasing the connectivity of the existing natural and cultural features.
Character Analysis

Main Street building placement

Main Street

Saloon
World's Largest Muskie

Conoco Gas Station

Paul Bunyan State Forest Entrance Markers
Opportunities & Constraints

You will probably note that some items are on both the opportunities and constraint lists. Constraints are not negative things, just areas in which it is important to exercise caution in the design work. Certain areas will have special needs or restrictions that it is important to be aware of.

Areas of Opportunity

Visibility Signage for Entry Marking
Gateway Entrance Location
Key Land Parcels
Open Space and Recreation
Trail Head Rest Area & Interpretive Center
Public Space
Boat Launch
Lake Belle Taine
Historic Downtown Nevis
Historic Structures
School Related Park Land
Lumber Mill

Areas of Constraint

Residential Areas
Lumber Mill
Drainage Areas

According to the Land Transformation Model Nevis will receive considerable development over the next twenty years. The LTM model has projected growth for key locations. Currently Nevis has a rural character with regional connections to the Lake Country Scenic Byway and Heartland Trail. Main Street reflects the town identity with its interesting building placement and world’s largest muskie. Currently there is a lack of visual access to the Main Street Corridor and the HWY.34 corridor lacks definition. The highway stretch is open and could use screening. Existing parcels along the Highway and Heartland Trail become important development opportunities for a growing region. The presence of the Lake, wonderful residential blocks, wood sculptor, historic features, and parks provide a strong foundation for Nevis to extend its town character to HWY.34 and create new connections within its existing resource network.
Nevis Village in the Woods

MASTER PLAN

The Nevis masterplan incorporates ideas that seek to create an extension of the existing Forest character of northern Minnesota. To accommodate projected growth and to avoid the consequences of unplanned "strip" development the plan calls for an extension of Main Street out to Lake Country Scenic Byway. This accomplishes three things, 1) Extends the Regional Recreation System into Downtown Nevis, 2) Connects Downtown Nevis directly to HWY.34, 3) Creates a visible Gateway to Main Street using a regionally accepted palette of materials and forms.

A new housing development will be composed of single family, multiple unit housing, and Senior housing along the parkway. Within the development will be Storm/Rain Water Infiltration Gardens and a trail system. All plantings will be reflective of the existing character seen in the region.

The Lumber Mill is a landmark of Nevis history and future. To make this more visible in the public eye within the master plan will be a provision for a Lumber Industry History Center. To make the physicality of the Mill site less visible a Screen of Trees will be planted on both sides of HWY. 34 through Nevis. This will act to reinforce the existing character of the town as well as to slow traffic. Speed limits through this stretch of highway will be 30 MPH.

To avoid the creation of a strip of businesses along HWY. 34 through Nevis, retail development will be channeled to a new node at the intersection of HWY.34 and Main Street, the new town gateway. This is an ideal location for this retail node due to proximity to the new town gateway, and Heartland Trailhead and Nevis History Center. Also close by are the Nevis Fishing Hall of Fame in the Historic Red Trailhead Structure.

Town Gateways are demarked by signage similar to those currently used by the State Forests in an attempt to reinforce a regionally accepted design vocabulary. Similar forms mark the new Main Street Entrance.

Within this framework it becomes necessary to take stock of the natural and cultural amenities and to begin the process of planning how to best develop these resources. Nevis has a unique character as a village of the Red Cedar Forest. Couple this with the surrounding chain of lakes and public recreational opportunities like the Heartland Trail, and it becomes clear that Nevis needs to foster these natural features and plan for these to become a literal extension of the Regional Recreational System in the future. Another immediate concern is how to plan for growth but retain the character of Nevis as a village in the woods.
Proposed Conditions
Nevis Village in the Woods

MASTER PLAN

This design creates a new destination along the Lake Country Scenic Byway. The concept uses the linear byway system as a tool to create a unique place and new connections throughout the town of Nevis. This organizing feature allows for better visual access to existing Nevis businesses, new pedestrian connections via trails, and new identity via street tree plantings, gateway design, stone sculpture, clustered retail node, and HWY.34/Main Street intersection. Through creative design, Nevis can preserve and enhance its existing rural town character.

The Masterplan is cued by the existing vernacular design elements of the Red Cedar Forest Region like the red and white clapboard construction, and skewed street orientation of historic structures.

Nevis History/Heartland Trailhead Center with impervious parking surface and trailhead information Kiosk

Historic structure augmentation provides ideal location for a combined use center where fishing enthusiasts could register their catch, view artifacts of Nevis fishing history, and get a snack. Similarly trail patrons would find tailored resources.
Opportunity to Cluster Retail Development effectively producing the antithesis of the strip.
Nevis Gateway Hwy. 34 & New Main Street Intersection:

The intersection of HWY.34 and Main Street becomes a major location for nevis. this view shows how the design uses new gateway markers, street tree plantings, new and relocated buildings, and paving patterns to mark this spot as a unique destination along the Byway. The expression of the Nevis town Character out to HWY.34 creates a visible town identity and unifies the new retail node with the existing landscape elements.
View B
Nevis Gateway Hwy. 34 & Bunyan Trails Drive Intersection: View A

The new intersection Gateway uses the Lake Country Scenic Byway signage to mark arrival into Nevis and direct movement towards the main street area. Coniferous street plantings create definition and unique character along Hwy. 34.

Neighborhood Section

- Single Unit Housing
- Multiple Unit Senior Housing
- Residential Street
- Bicycle/Walking Trail
- Stormwater Infiltration Swale
- Major Street

24 ft. | 10 ft. | 10 ft. | 7 ft. | 36 ft.
Lake Country Scenic Byway
Signage/Gateways

The Limestone obelisk sign uses a monument similar to Paul Bunyan State Forest entrance markers. These elements become the physical vocabulary to mark and connect key features such as Main Street Nevis, the Heartland Trail, and the Lake Country Scenic Byway.