

Action Plan

CHAPTER 10

Connecticut River Scenic Byway

Prioritized Recommendations and Procedures

Franklin County

The Connecticut River Scenic Byway area is rich in historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources. The route travels along rural roads in Franklin and Hampshire Counties. This action plan identifies initiatives that will protect and enhance the qualities of the Byway region. The action items listed are taken from the recommendations in each chapter of the plan. In some cases, these recommendations have been consolidated. Each item includes a suggested leader to take on the actions and a rough estimate of the timeframe required to complete each action. These items are recommendations only and can be modified to fit the specific context and priorities of each community along the Byway.

Agency Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the Action Plan Table.

CISA - Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
FCC – Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
LT – Land Trust (one or more of the many land trusts that operate in the Byway area)
MA DAR – Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
MA DCR – Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
MassDOT – Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MDFW – Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
MHC – Massachusetts Historical Commission
MWRA/WSCAC – Massachusetts Water Resource Agency/ Water Supply Citizens
Advisory Committee
RPAs – Regional Planning Agencies
Town – Local community
WC – Watershed Council

Timeframes:

Short-term – 1-5 years for implementation
Long-term – 5 years or longer for implementation
On-going – Continuing implementation

Scenic Resources

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Work with willing land owners to permanently protect scenic, historic, and environmentally sensitive areas along the Byway through the purchase of conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions, or fee interest.	Ongoing	LT, MA DCR, MA DAR, MDFW, Town, RPAs
Coordinate with regional, state and nonprofit land protection efforts to ensure the continued conservation of important natural, recreational, scenic, and open space resources.	Ongoing	LT, MA DCR, MA DAR, MDFW, Town, RPAs
Encourage the use of roadway features (guardrails, retaining walls) that are aesthetically pleasing.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Towns
Educate landowners and communities about the programs that are available as tools for land protection.	Ongoing	LT, RPAs, DCR, DAR

Natural Resources

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Incorporate best management mitigation techniques to treat road runoff before it is discharged into sensitive habitat areas or waterways.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Towns
Provide a toolkit to towns with initiatives that can be undertaken to protect natural resources along the Byway.	Short-term	RPAs
Consider implementing zoning measures to protect sensitive habitats, preserve natural and scenic resources.	Long-term	Towns
Develop an educational campaign that promotes the protection of the natural resources along the Byway.	Long-term	Town, WC

Roadway and Transportation

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Ensure that all improvements to the roadway infrastructure are in keeping with the scenic character of the Byway to the extent possible.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Town, RPAs
Consider use of more aesthetically appropriate guardrail alternatives where possible.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Town, RPAs
Complete analysis of lane departure crashes to identify needed improvements along the Byway.	Short-term	MassDOT, RPAs, Towns
Explore opportunities to re-strip the roadway to provide more shoulder space within the existing pavement width for bicyclists.	Short-term	MassDOT, Town, RPAs
Identify Complete Streets improvements in town centers along the Byway.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, MassDOT
Work to create pedestrian connections within the downtown centers and connecting points of interest along the Byway.	Ongoing	Town, RPAs, MassDOT
Complete improvements to make Sunderland center more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.	Short-term	Town, RPA, MassDOT
Continue to monitor the performance of key intersections along the Byway.	Ongoing	RPAs, MassDOT
Conduct an inventory and evaluation of signs along the Byway, particularly focusing on outdated or faded signs.	Ongoing	RPAs
Identify degraded or missing signs for historic squares in town and pursue funding to replace or restore these signs.	Ongoing	RPAs, Towns
Implement pedestrian safety improvements and ADA compliant upgrades.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Towns, RPAs
Support efforts to expand public transit services in the Byway area to make use more convenient for all.	Ongoing	RPA, Towns, RTAs
Support context sensitive bicycle and pedestrian improvements as part of the Sunderland North Main Street Project.	Short-term	Town, RPA, MassDOT

Recreation

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Develop new river access locations along the Connecticut River.	Long-Term	Towns, RPA, DCR
Develop a river access at School Street in Sunderland.	Short-term	Town, DCR
Maintain and update the information about the Connecticut River Scenic Byway that is included in the Western Massachusetts Scenic Byways website.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA, FCC
Continue to distribute and build on the Connecticut River Bicycling map that was developed as part of the Western Massachusetts Byway Marketing Project.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA, FCC
Develop and implement a marketing campaign to promote bicycle tourism in the Connecticut River Valley.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, FCC
Seek to acquire conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions or fee interest in land from willing landowners for the protection of recreational and natural resources within the Byway region.	Ongoing	RPAs, Towns, DAR, MA DCR, MA DFW, and land trusts
Expand opportunities for visitors to learn about the natural resources that can be enjoyed along the Byway. The Byway could be used as a vehicle to introduce the natural resources within the forests and parks system.	Ongoing	RPA, DCR, Towns, MRWC, and LT
Encourage the investment of federal, state, municipal, and private dollars for the purpose of developing, maintaining, and expanding recreational areas, facilities and programs within the Byway region.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA, MA DCR, and MA MDFW.
Develop and maintain multi-use and limited-use trails to provide access to natural, scenic, and recreational areas where appropriate.	Long-term	Towns, LT, MA DCR, and MA MDFW.
Support efforts by state and local entities to improve universal access to public facilities.	Ongoing	MA DCR, Towns

Improve access to parks and recreational areas within the Byway region for the disabled, seniors, and children.	Ongoing	MA DCR, Towns
Complete a detailed inventory of recreational facilities and possible universal access improvements.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns, MA DCR
Develop driving tours with different Byway themes.	Short-term	Town, MHC
Develop an educational campaign that promotes the protection of the natural resources along the Byway.	Long-term	Town, WC

Historic Resources

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Support the efforts of towns along the Byway to create National Historic Districts.	On-going	MHC, Towns, RPAs
Encourage local historical commissions to alert and educate property owners to the federal tax credits that are available for restoration work that occurs on properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.	Ongoing	MHC, Towns, RPAs
Assist in the documentation and preservation of historical resources. Pursue funding options when appropriate and available.	Ongoing	MHC, Towns, RPAs
Develop walking tours of town centers along the Byway that highlights the unique historical resources.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, MHC
Install individual markers at specific historic locations to benefit the public.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, MHC
Work actively with property owners to identify significant historic structures and develop plans to assist in their restoration and/or preservation.	Long-term	MHC, Towns, RPAs
Encourage local town historical commissions to complete inventory forms for all historic properties within the Byway study area.	Long-term	MHC, Towns, RPAs
Encourage local towns to consider passing demolition delay or other local	Long-term	MHC, Towns

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
ordinances to protect historic resources along the Byway.		
Pursue funding (grants and other available sources) to complete restorations of historic structures.	Long-term	Town, RPAs
Support the nomination of the Millers Falls Historic District for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.	Short-term	Town, RPA, MHC

Community Planning

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Review and revise zoning regulations to support development and redevelopment that is consistent with the character of the Byway.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA
Encourage commercial establishments to use signs, external lighting, building characteristics, and landscaping that complement the scenic, historic, and natural character of the Byway.	Ongoing	Towns
Pursue options to preserve and promote historic resources along the Byway, such as the development of architectural guidelines for historic structures to assist property owners when completing historic renovation or restoration projects.	Ongoing	Towns

Tourism

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Encourage appropriate and sustainable economic development where wanted by towns.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA
Enhance the public visibility of sustainable agricultural businesses in the Byway towns and promote the purchase of local farm products.	Ongoing	MADAR, Town Ag. Comm.
Link the Byway with community	Ongoing	Towns, RPA

development and preservation by utilizing resources such as eco tourism, heritage tourism, farming tourism and the marketing of local products.		
Educate tourism promotion organizations and tourist-related businesses about the existence of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway.	Short-term	FCC, RPA, Towns
Launch a campaign to promote bicycle tourism in the Byway area.	Short-term	RPA, MassDOT, FCCC
Continue to maintain and refresh the western Massachusetts Scenic Byway website to include information on sites of interest on the Byway.	Short-term	RPA
Develop a program to educate the local public about the heritage and history of the Byway.	Short-term	Towns, RPA
Educate tourism promotion organizations and tourist-related businesses about the existence of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway.	Ongoing	FCC
Develop driving tours with different Byway themes.	Short-term	Town, MHC
Use the Connecticut River Byway logo as part of a campaign to promote the businesses along the Byway.	Short-term	Town, FCCC

Economic Development

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Promote existing artisan and crafts related businesses.	Ongoing	Town, FCC
Coordinate maintenance of the website that was developed and implemented as part of the western Massachusetts Scenic Byway Marketing Project.	Short-term	RPAs, MassDOT
Promote local farm products.	Short-term	CISA, Towns
Identify potential locations and seek funding to establish a public restroom to serve the Byway.	Long-term	Town, FCC, MassDOT