

Action Plan

CHAPTER 10

Route 116 Scenic Byway

Prioritized Recommendations and Procedures

The Route 116 Scenic Byway area is rich in historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources. The route travels along rural roads in Franklin, Hampshire and Berkshire Counties.

Our vision for the Route 116 Scenic Byway and the Corridor Management Plan is to preserve and protect the scenic qualities, natural resources, historic structures/places, cultural resources and community character while educating people about the tourism, recreational, and economic opportunities along the Byway.

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. Items are grouped by the goals they accomplish. 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. There are also more recommendations that pertain to the specific chapter topics at the end of each chapter. The intention is to not repeat the recommendations again but to connect these recommendations to the overall plan goals.

Agency Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the Action Plan Table.

BG – Berkshire Grown

BCC – Berkshire County Chamber of Commerce

CISA - Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture

FCC – Franklin County Chamber of Commerce

GSCC – Greater Springfield 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

Promote and enhance roadway safety while taking into consideration the rural qualities of the Byway and continue to support improvements that are being completed by MassDOT.

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, RPA
Consider use of more aesthetically appropriate guardrail alternatives where possible.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Town, RPA
Identify pull-off areas that are in need of improvements to safety.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, MassDOT
Explore options to better define parking near Plainfield Pond.	Short-term	Town, PVPC and MassDOT
Complete Road Safety Audits and other traffic related studies to identify needed improvements along the Byway.	Short-term	MassDOT, RPAs, Towns
Implement pavement improvements along the Byway that include edge and centerline rumble strips.	Long-term	MassDOT, Town, BRPC
Improve existing pull-offs and create new ones to allow travelers to stop and enjoy views, read historic and/or informational signs and markers that are along the Byway.	Long-term	Towns, RPAs, MassDOT

Preserve and enhance the character of the corridor by acquiring land from willing property owners and protecting important viewsheds and natural resources.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Work with willing land owners to permanently protect high priority 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
Incorporate best management mitigation techniques to treat road runoff before it is discharged into sensitive habitat areas or waterways.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Towns
Educate landowners and communities about the programs that are available as tools for land protection.	Ongoing	LT, RPAs, DCR, DAR
Provide a toolkit to towns with initiatives that can be undertaken to protect resources along the Byway.	Short-term	RPAs
Consider implementing zoning measures to protect sensitive habitats, preserve natural and scenic resources, and to focus new development into existing village center areas as appropriate.	Long-term	Towns

Maintain, protect, and enhance the historic resources, villages and districts within the Byway corridor.

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 private owners in securing grant funding, tax incentives, and other financial benefits that are available for historic preservation.	Ongoing	MHC, Towns, RPAs
Assist in the documentation and preservation of historical resources. Pursue funding options when appropriate and available.	Ongoing	MHC, Towns, RPAs

Encourage the use of appropriate signs and lighting along the Byway so that these features do not detract from the scenic qualities.	Ongoing	Towns
Sponsor a Massachusetts Historical Commission “On the Road” program to provide information to the local communities about historic preservation tools and programs.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, MHC
Develop a driving tour of the Byway that highlights the unique historical resources.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs, MHC
Construct information kiosks at strategic locations to make more historical information available to the public.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs
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
Work to protect and preserve important archeological sites along the Byway.	Long-term	MHC, Towns
Pursue funding (grants and other available sources) to complete restorations of historic structures.	Long-term	Town, RPAs

Promote a low impact approach to tourism based on natural, recreational, historic, and cultural resources that minimizes traffic congestion.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Encourage appropriate and sustainable economic development where wanted by towns.	Ongoing	Towns, RPAs
Enhance the public visibility of sustainable agricultural and forestry businesses in the Byway towns and promote the purchase of local forest and farm products.	Ongoing	MADAR, Town Ag. Comm.
Link the Byway with community development and preservation by utilizing resources such as eco tourism, heritage tourism, and the marketing of local products.	Ongoing	Towns, RPAs

Educate tourism promotion organizations and tourist-related businesses about the existence of the Route 116 Scenic Byway.	Short-term	BCC, FCC, GSCC, RPAs, Towns
Continue to participate in the coordinated project to develop a marketing plan for all of the Scenic Byways in Western Massachusetts.	Short-term	RPAs
Develop a program to educate the local public about the heritage and history of the Byway.	Short-term	Towns, RPAs

Enhance and develop information resources for the Byway.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Promote existing artisan and crafts related businesses.	Ongoing	Town, BCC, FCC, GSCC
Coordinate maintenance of the marketing tools (website and promotional brochure) that were developed and implemented as part of the western Massachusetts Scenic Byway Marketing Project.	Short-term	RPAs, MassDOT, Byway Advisory Committee Members
Promote local farm and forest products.	Short-term	CISA, BG, Towns
Identify potential locations and seek funding to establish a public restroom to serve the Byway.	Long-term	Town, BCC, FCC, GSCC, MassDOT

Support, maintain and enhance the quality of outdoor recreational experiences (such as hiking, picnicking, kayaking or canoeing) available to Byway users.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Maintain and update the information about the Route 116 Scenic Byway that is included in the Western Massachusetts Scenic Byways website including but not limited to recreational opportunities, historical and other tourism related information.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA, BCC, FCC, GSCC
Distribute the comprehensive guide and map brochure that was developed as part of the Western Massachusetts Byway Marketing Project.	Ongoing	Towns, RPA, BCC, FCC, GSCC
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 land trusts
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, local land trusts, MA DCR, and MA MDFW.

Increase universal accessibility to recreation areas and associated facilities.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
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 to identify needs.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns, MA DCR

Promote educational opportunities for students and the general public related to Byway resources.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Educate tourism promotion organizations and tourist-related businesses about the existence of the Route 116 Scenic Byway.	Ongoing	BCC, FCC, GSCC
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

Support projects to improve the safety of the Byway for motorists, pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles as appropriate to the roadway conditions, such as scenic pull-off areas.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Work to create pedestrian connections within the downtown centers and connecting points of interest along the Byway.	Ongoing	Town, RPAs, 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.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Towns, RPAs
Ensure that all improvements to the roadway infrastructure are in line with the scenic character of the Byway to the extent possible.	Ongoing	MassDOT, Towns, RPAs
Investigate the need for “share the road” signs and other signs to alert motorist of bicyclists traveling on the Byway.	Short-term	RPAs, MassDOT
Install Franklin County Bikeway logo signs on the routes that are in the Route 116 Scenic Byway area.	Short-term	FRCOG, MassDOT
Develop safe bike routes within the Byway towns that connect the village centers and places of interest.	Long-term	MassDOT, Towns, RPAs
Investigate the need for additional sidewalk infrastructure and ways to bring it into line with current ADA standards.	Long-term	RPAs, MassDOT
Enhance the existing and develop new roadside pull-offs, as needed and as appropriate to the rural character of the Byway, to enhance access to outdoor recreational opportunities.	Long-term	MassDOT, Towns
Add Scenic Byway signage and advanced warning of pull-out areas to highlight the scenic qualities of the Byway.	Long-term	MassDOT
Continue to monitor crash data along the Byway and make recommendations for safety improvements where necessary.	Long-term	RPAs, MassDOT