CHAPTER 2

Scenic Resources
To assess the scenic resources of the eastern section of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) staff traveled the road and systematically rated the historic downtowns, rural landscapes and long and panoramic views along the Byway corridor. The scoring system is based on a similar landscape assessment procedure used by the FRCOG to assess the scenic resources along the western section of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway, the Route 112 Scenic Byway, and the Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway. Some modifications to the evaluation form and ranking system were made to better suit the specific characteristics of the eastern section of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. The assessment procedure is described below, and a sample of the Scenic Assessment Evaluation Form is included at the end of this chapter.

**Scenic Assessment Process**

**Step 1**
To assess the scenic resources of the Byway, the corridor was divided into "visual segments," which share common visual characteristics as determined while driving along its length. The following five categories were used to divide the byway into “visual segments” – Farmland/Open Land (crop fields, orchards, hayfields, pasture land, and non-forested open land including recreation areas); Farmland Developed (fields and forest lands that have some residential and/or commercial development interspersed with active farms); Forest (forested land including both mature and successional); Village/Town Center (central commercial and industrial areas with multi-storied buildings, community and government facilities and apartments and multi-family housing; and Developed Land (including residential subdivisions, commercial development, and industrial areas).

For visual segments that have two different characteristics, for example residential development along one side of the road and agricultural land with a historic farm house on the other side, the evaluator made a judgment about which is the dominant visual feature. Each “visual segment” was evaluated every ½ mile according to the procedure detailed in Step 2 with a separate Scenic Assessment Evaluation Form completed for each of the ½-mile sections.

**Step 2**
Each ½-mile section within the larger “visual segment” was evaluated twice, driving east and driving west, using the Scenic Assessment Evaluation Form found at the end of this chapter. All features, both scenic and detracting, along each side of the ½-mile road were included in the segment ranking. Scenic features that are present within each ½-mile section of a segment received a +1; detracting features within each ½-mile segment received a −1. In addition, for the topography landscape features, all topography that
could be seen from the byway, not just topography within the ½-mile study area was noted. This accounts for the many long-range and panoramic views that can be seen from the Byway. For example, if a river view was present with a mountain range in the background, both river view and mountainous would receive a +1. These figures were added together for either a west or east directional total. After the same assessment was completed in the opposite direction, the two directional totals were added together and divided by 2 to give a "segment score." The evaluators conducting the landscape assessment drove the entire roadway in one direction filling out segment evaluation forms and then repeated the process in the opposite direction.

**Step 3**

A number of “visual sections” were added together if they represented a continuous string/length of one of the five visual segment categories. The larger “visual segment” score was calculated by adding the total score from each of the Scenic Evaluation Forms completed (one for each ½-mile section) within that “visual segment,” and dividing by the number of ½-mile sections within the particular “visual segment.” For example, if a particular “visual segment” is six miles long, 12 Scenic Evaluation Forms would be filled out, and these 12 segment scores would be averaged to calculate the visual assessment score. The “visual segment” was then ranked based on the following categories:

- Outstanding (Score Range: 14 or greater)
- Distinctive (Score Range: 10-13)
- Noteworthy (Score Range: 6-9)
- Average (Score Range: less than 6)

**Scenic Assessment**

The eastern section of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway is very different from the western trail because of the industrial development that took place in Athol, Orange, Erving, Millers Falls, Turners Falls, and Greenfield in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its mountains, forests and rivers, especially the Millers River, are comparable to the scenic quality of the western section of the Byway. However, the scenic and historic quality of the towns and main streets of the communities along the byway add a significant and unique dimension to a visitor’s experience and exploration. The scenic assessment procedure used to complete the landscape evaluation was adjusted and landscape features were included to capture the importance of the historic industrial heritage of the region.

In Franklin County, the eastern section of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway is 23 miles long; in Worcester County it is 5 miles long. The entire length of the study area that is included in this Corridor Management Plan (28 miles) was divided into fifty-six visual segments. The descriptions of the segments begin in Athol at the intersection of Routes 202, 2 and 2A and ends at the rotary intersection of Route 2, Interstate 91 and Route 2A in Greenfield. The Scenic Byway is described sequentially from east to west. It is important to note that the scenic assessment was completed travel-
ing both east and west in order to account for features that are visible from each direction.

**Segment 1**

**Residential Development**

*In Athol from the intersection of Routes 2A, 202 and 2 in Athol to the Route 32 sign for Barre and Petersham (mile 0 to mile 1.0)*

**Characteristics**

This 1-mile segment located in Athol is the eastern terminus of the study area. It is a developed section with an abandoned farm on the south side of the road, historic houses scattered among the woods on both sides of the roadway, wetland areas and a small stream on the south side of the Byway, a new townhouse subdivision, a 50-acre parcel with water and sewer zoned for industrial development, woodlands, and stone walls. The open lands of the farm, historic quality of the homes, and the woodlands and wetland views make this a unique area.

**Findings**

- This less developed section of the Mohawk Trail has the potential for more residential development along the highway, which could erode the rural quality of the drive.
- The Town of Athol has zoned a new, 50-acre industrial development site near the intersection of Routes 2A, 202 and 2, which could create traffic in this rural residential area and may impact the scenic character of the Byway without appropriate screening.

**Segment 2**

**Residential and Commercial Development**

*In Athol from Route 32 sign for Barre and Petersham to Chestnut Street and the Common (mile 1.0 to 2.0)*

**Characteristics**

This 1-mile stretch is characterized by mixed development including sidewalks, historic buildings, the Athol High School, Hospital, Police and Fire Departments, residential neighborhoods, an old wooden mill building in need of repair, a bank, and ball field. The terrain is gently sloping and is wooded in certain areas with views of wetlands, and a small stream and waterfall.

**Findings**

- The newer commercial development is very evident as compared with the historic residences and older commercial and industrial buildings of the area.
- In some cases, the older buildings are in need of repair.
- Even though homes are evident and the sidewalks tie the residences to the commercial area, some additional pedestrian amenities would help to give this area a better sense of neighborhood.
- Plantings and landscaping around the newer commercial buildings would help soften the streetscape and improve the scenic character.
Segment 3
Residential and Commercial Development
In Athol from Chestnut Street and the Common to residence #1034 near a cobbled retaining wall (mile 2.0 to mile 2.5)

Characteristics
This 1/2-mile commercial/residential neighborhood known as “Uptown Common” was Athol’s first commercial and transportation center. It has fine examples of 18th and 19th century two and three story clapboard homes and newer commercial development, which for the most part, complements the architecturally significant residences and the neighborhood-feel of the area. Spread among the historic residential neighborhood are the town common, churches, a market and restaurant, and other local services and professional offices. This portion of the Mohawk Trail includes sites along the Athol History Trail and a view of the historic mill section and Millers River. As the Byway descends down the hill toward the mills and town center, the buildings become smaller and include “factory housing” rather than the “larger homes” of Uptown Common.

Findings
• This section of town while very historic is not listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, which would help Athol to recognize and protect the quality of the neighborhood. A National Register listing would also make private property owners, who use there properties for commercial purposes and who are interested in completing historic restorations, eligible for federal tax credits.
• In some cases, the older smaller buildings are in need of repair.

Segment 4
Downtown Athol (Village/Town Center)
In Athol from residence #1034 near a cobbled retaining wall to the bridge over the Millers River at Raymond Place (mile 2.5 to mile 3.5)

Characteristics
This 1-mile section includes downtown Athol. The downtown section of Athol comprises a complex of 19th and 20th century mill buildings, many of which are still in use, and some scattered factory housing; a section of Main Street that contains municipal and community services buildings including the Town Hall (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), Athol Library, YMCA, a war memorial common, and a historic railroad station; and a lengthy commercial section made up of older two-and-three-story historic structures with newer one-story buildings.

At the intersection of Main and Exchange Streets, there is the “Pequoig Hotel”, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the historic “Millers River National Bank” building, and Athol Veterans Plaza, which has significant historic mill buildings to the south and west.

Further west on Main Street, there is a mix of mill buildings, gas stations, car dealerships, professional buildings, churches and some residential development. This area is an active working

1. Athol was once called Pequoig.
downtown. The Alan E. Rich Environmental Park is at the west end of town. The Park has parking, a boat ramp and hiking trails.

Findings
- The mill section of downtown is a significant and unique asset. There are a number of active companies in the complex, such as Starrett Tools, which means some of the historic structures are being maintained. However, other mill buildings are in need of repair. Effort should be made through grant funding to help property owners restore and maintain these historic mills and to ensure that the industrial heritage of the area is preserved.
- The Millers River is very evident in the mill district of downtown. Perhaps, the Town and some of the companies benefitting from the power that the River generates could work with the Millers River Watershed Council to interpret the industrial and natural history of Athol and the Millers River. Like the Athol History Trail, such a program would be a point of interest for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. (There is discussion of restoring one of the dams by the Starrett Tools Company to generate more renewable hydropower from the Millers River. Perhaps, this provides an opportunity to garner some economic development, historic preservation and environmental education grants.)
- Consideration should be given to gaining National Register of Historic Places status for the mill district and downtown. Currently, two buildings are individually listed – the Old Town Hall located at 1307 Main Street and the Pequoig Hotel at 402-428 Main Street. There are many more historically significant buildings on Main Street (Route 2A) and side streets that may be eligible for inclusion.
- The mill buildings offer the potential for more commercial or residential space. It may be
useful to complete an assessment of the vacant space and potential for economic development. The Town of Athol should explore the restoration, maintenance and reuse of the mill buildings. This area of downtown is critical to the long-term economic vitality of Athol. Should industries close or move, a plan for attracting new industries and businesses and/or redeveloping and reusing the structures should be in place. Uses could include professional offices, incubator space for start-up businesses, retail space, and residential uses.

- Signage on the newer one-story buildings could be designed to be more in keeping with the historic character of the business district. The Town might consider the Façade Improvement Loan Program, Sign Program, and/or Streetscape Improvements to help local downtown property owners renew their store fronts and enhance the pedestrian scale amenities of the downtown.

**Segment 5**

**Residential and Commercial Development**

*In Athol from the bridge over the Millers River at Raymond Place to rock out cropping near a business on north side (mile 3.5 to mile 4.0)*

**Characteristics**

This 1/2-mile section includes older homes interspersed with newer commercial and professional buildings – gas stations, medical clinics, and the like. While part of downtown Athol, it has a separate and distinct feel to it from the rest of the community.

**Findings**

- None

**Segment 6**

**Residential and Commercial Development**

*In Athol from out cropping near a business on north side to just past the Daniel Shays Highway intersection at the mall/plaza (mile 4.0 to mile 5.0)*

**Characteristics**

This 1-mile segment while categorized as developed land still remains quite open as a consequence of the farmland and forested areas nearby. The lands along the road are wooded and sparsely developed with businesses, farms and residences. The Millers River runs fairly close to the road, but is not noticeable.

**Findings**

- An effort should be made to preserve and highlight the woodlands and wetlands along this stretch of the Byway. They are important habitats and contrast with the commercial development that has taken place between the two historic downtowns of Athol and Orange.

**Segment 7**

**Residential and Commercial Development**

*In Orange from just past the Daniel Shays Highway intersection at the mall/plaza to intersection sign to Route 202 (mile 5.0 to mile 6.0)*
Characteristics
About a mile out of downtown Athol, strip development becomes dominant on the southern side of the road including a small plaza, car dealerships, tire companies, fast food establishments, gas stations, and an intersection sign. On the north side of Route 2A, there are woods and scattered residential and commercial developments. Shortly after the intersection with the Daniel Shays Highway, Route 2A enters Orange and commercial and industrial development is found on both sides of the Byway. One of three Orange “Welcome The Friendly Town” signs is located here.

Findings
• Landscaping by businesses along road would help soften the appearance of the strip development and enhance the driving experience along the Byway.

Segment 8
Downtown Orange (Residential and Commercial Development)
In Orange from intersection sign to Wheeler Avenue (mile 6.0 to mile 6.5)

Characteristics
In Orange near Wheeler Avenue, the development shifts to the north side of Route 2A, because the railroad and Millers River are on the south side. Just before entering downtown, there is a significant wetland area opposite an industrial, commercial and residential section that includes a big box and tire store.

Findings
• The wetland area is a gem and could be a unique and important recreational/educational area for Orange where residents and visitors alike could boat and see wildlife.

Segment 9
Downtown Orange (Village/Town Center)
In Orange from Wheeler Avenue to Route 2A sign, the Library and Grove Street (mile 6.5 to mile 7.5)

Characteristics
This 1-mile section of downtown is a stretch of commercial and residential development on both sides of the Byway. Both businesses and single family homes line the roadside. This segment of the Byway includes: a bit of the industrial, commercial and residential section opposite the wetland area; a residential and commercial sector with some significant one-and-two story buildings (the historic private residence known as the Eastern Star Home, the Wheeler Memorial Library, the 1880 House and Masonic Lodge), and smaller residences and businesses some of which are in need of repair.

Findings
• Some of the homes and businesses are in need of repair and landscaping to improve their appearance and the travel experience.

Segment 10
Downtown Orange (Village/Town Center)
In Orange from Route 2A sign, the Library and Grove Street to pull off on north side of Route 2 (mile 7.5 to mile 8.5)
Characteristics
This 1-mile segment of the Byway travels through the northern part of downtown Orange. It is part of the Orange Center Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is roughly bounded by North Main Street, East Main Street, East River Street, South Main Street, West River Street and West Main Street. Downtown Orange is pedestrian-friendly with a historic streetscape, sidewalks and parks.

Much of the town center is south of the Millers River. Route 2A is north of the River and is known locally as East and West Main Streets. Route 2A is the east-west access/gateway to the center of downtown Orange. The Route 2A portion of town center includes historic two-and-three story buildings and newer one-story structures; Putnam Hall and two smaller historic structures; and a residential and commercial section of town ending at the Bed Room Factory (formerly the Minute Tapioca Company).

Orange’s new Riverfront Park is on East River Street across the Millers River from the Scenic Byway. It provides paddlers (in either kayak or canoe) access to the river and a restful place to stop for lunch and to admire the scenic nature of the waterway.

Findings
- The block where Putnam Hall and two smaller historic buildings are located should be restored, preserved and reused. This block could be a critical component to the revitalization of Orange and would add to the scenic quality of the Byway through the town. Putnam Hall is in an ideal location to serve as a visitor information center for the Byway.
- Business signage should be improved on Route 2A to tie the commercial district together.
- A façade improvement program could be started to enhance the appearance of Route 2A and encourage the economic renewal of downtown Orange.
- If not already underway, an endeavor should be made to attract new businesses – restaurants, taverns, and entertainment venues – to enliven downtown.
- Directional signs should be created to provide information about the points of interest and historic structures in town – Town Hall, the World War I Memorial Park and “Peace Memorial” to the Veterans of WWI, the new Riverfront Park, mill buildings along the Millers River, significant wildlife habitat like the wetlands north and south of Route 2A and the library.
- Some of the homes and commercial buildings along the Byway are in need of repair and landscaping to improve their appearance and the travel experience.
- A survey of downtown, particularly of the occupancy and use of upper floors in downtown buildings, may help Orange to understand what is needed and how underutilized spaces could be better used. Could these spaces be renovated to provide professional offices, apartments, or senior and affordable housing? The use of upper floors could help
support Main Street businesses and revitalize the downtown.  
- Some sort of protection for historic buildings should be put in place to keep them from being torn down and to encourage restoration and reuse.  
- An analysis could be carried out to understand uses that would encourage economic development.

**Segment 11**
**Forest, Residential and Commercial Development**
*In Orange from pull off north side of Route 2A to Haskins Road (mile 8.5 to mile 9.5)*

**Characteristics**
The Millers River runs directly next to a portion of the Byway in this segment, complementing this forested section of the road and making the drive very scenic. This portion of Route 2A includes two picturesque farmsteads, scattered housing, a gravel pit, a restaurant located in a historic Art Deco diner built in 1934, forested lands, and the small community of West Orange. The town wastewater treatment facility has a lovely picnic area on and access to the Millers River. Homes in this area are well kept. Utility lines and guardrails are quite noticeable in this area.

**Findings**
- The scenic nature of the road could be improved by removing the above ground utilities and making the guardrails conform to the natural/rustic quality of the roadway.
- The gravel pit could be landscaped to screen it from byway travelers.

**Segment 12**
**Residential Development**
*In Orange from Haskins Road to the intersection with Wendell Depot Road (mile 9.5 to mile 10.5)*

**Characteristics**
Beginning at the small enclave/neighborhood of the historic houses of West Orange, this mile segment is characterized by gently sloping and forested lands, views of the Millers River, which runs right beside the road, a pond, the West Orange Cemetery, a farmstead in need of repair, scattered housing, and prominent guardrails and utility lines.

**Findings**
- The scenic nature of the road could be improved by removing the above ground utilities and making the guardrails conform to the natural/rustic quality of the roadway.

**Segment 13**
**Forest and Commercial Development**
*In Orange from Wendell Depot Road to the intersection with Route 2 West (mile 10.5 to mile 11.5)*

**Characteristics**
This 1-mile segment is where the Byway goes under Route 2, passes the a restaurant and the Headquarters for the State Forests.

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2. A catch-22 exists for most property owners, which needs to be addressed to enable the redevelopment of rural town centers. Most businesses cannot afford to install elevators in their multi-story structures – a requirement of renovation – so upper floors remain unimproved and unused. Legislation and funding might be pursued to remedy this problem, e.g. a Main Street Development Grant and/or Façade Improvement Loan Program.

3. The diner was once known as the White Drum, which the structure resembles.
in the area including the Orange, Erving and Wendell State Forests. The Byway enters the Town of Erving at this point. A portion of this segment travels along the Millers Rivers. Another one of the welcome signs is here.

**Findings**
- None

**Segment 14**
**Forest and Industrial Development**
*In Erving from the intersection with Route 2 West to Prospect Street near Zilinski Field Route 2 (mile 11.5 to mile 12.5)*

**Characteristics**
This 1½-mile segment of the Byway is forested, but also includes the Erving Paper Mill, Erving’s waste water treatment plant, and the newly constructed Route 2 bypass of the mill. The road narrows at the “Welcome to Erving” sign at the entrance to Erving Center. The welcome sign is part of a recently completed comprehensive streetscape Improvement Project, which included the installation of pedestrian lighting from sign into town center.

**Findings**
- The new bypass may increase the speed of travelers coming from the east and additional traffic calming measures should be considered for the downtown.

**Segment 15**
**Village Center/Downtown**
*In Erving from Prospect Street near Zilinski Field to pedestrian sign at the west end of Erving Center (mile 12.5 to mile 13.0)*

**Characteristics**
Here the road travels through the commercial, “main street” section of Erving Center. Most of the residential section of town is above the village center on the north side of the Byway. On the south side of the roadway, there are a historic railroad depot and freight house, and a truck yard. The Millers River runs behind them and is the town line between Wendell and Erving.

**Findings**
- The truck yard compromises a very historic commercial section of the village center. An effort should be made to screen it or enhance it with plantings so that it is no longer impacts the aesthetic of Erving Center.
- The Millers River could be made more visible and “useful” to the scenic quality of the downtown by elevating its presents behind the rail buildings.
- There is an opportunity and interest (from previous study groups) in creating pedestrian and bicycle access from Erving Center to Farley – the trail should be away from the Byway because a bike or walking path along Route 2 would be unsafe.

**Segment 16**
**Farmland Developed and Forest**
*In Erving from pedestrian sign at west end of Erving Center to 40 mph sign (mile 13.0 to mile 14.5)*

**Characteristics**
This 2½-mile segment travels right along the Millers River and is very scenic. Apart from two or three
farmhouses and the railroad track on the south side of the Byway and River, there is no development. It is forested on both sides of the road/river. At various places there are long views of the river rapids and large cobblesstones to the mountains in Wendell. The Erving cliffs (Farley Ledges) are on the right above the road way.

Findings
- There are few pull-offs on Route 2 to enable access to the Millers River.
- The guardrail conflicts with the wildness of the River and forested mountain landscape on both sides of the River.

Segment 17
Farley (Village/Town Center)
In Erving from 40 mph sign to red house on south side of the Byway (mile 14.5 to mile 15.5)

Characteristics
This is a gently rolling landscape with views of the mountains in Wendell and the village center of Farley.

Findings
- None

Segment 18
Farmland/Developed and Forest
In Erving from red house on south side of the Byway to the building on big bend (south side) near the Prospect Street intersection (mile 15.5 to mile 18.5)

Characteristics
This is 3½-mile section of forested lands. The only development is an occasional farmstead. There are many long and panoramic views of mountains to Wendell and Gill and of the Connecticut River Valley in the distance. In the fall the hills are magnificent with color. The road is wider with shoulders and passing lanes for the hills, which allows the traveler to see more of
the landscape. There is a rest area at the bottom of one of the hills on the south side of the road.

**Findings**
- None

**Segment 19**
**Commercial and Developed Land**
*In Erving from the building on big bend (south side) near the Prospect Street intersection to Dorsey Road (mile 18.5 to mile 19.5)*

**Characteristics**
This section of Route 2 is just outside of the village center of Millers Falls. It is quite developed and includes a bowling alley, a motel, other retail interests, an apartment building, and some single-family houses.

Route 63, which is part of the north-south Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway, intersects with the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway at this point, and takes travelers into the historic Village of Millers Falls, one of the six downtowns along the Trail that highlights the industrial heritage of the area.

**Findings**
- The commercial “edge” of pavement and parking could be softened with plantings and uniform/improved signage.
- Signage could be improved to guide visitors to Millers Falls and to discuss the industrial heritage of the Trail as a whole.4

**Segment 20**
**Forest**
*In Erving from Dorsey Road to the west side of the French King Bridge (rest area) over the Connecticut River (mile 19.5 to mile 20.0)*

**Characteristics**
This is a forested section of the Byway. There is some develop-
ment which includes the Town Police Station, the state garage, and the French King Motel. The roadway travels over the Connecticut River on the French King Bridge which offers spectacular views up and down the river to Northfield, Gill and Erving. The rest area at either end of the bridge allows travelers to park and walk across the span connecting Erving and Gill high above the Connecticut River. There is information about this reach of the Connecticut River. Once on the bridge one can look north to French King Rock, the Towns of Northfield and Gill, and the mountain valley of the Connecticut River toward Vermont and New Hampshire. The French King Gorge is an ecological and scenic gem. The gorge was formed thousands of years ago by glacial melt waters. It can be viewed from the French King Bridge. The confluence of the Millers River with the Connecticut River is to the south of the bridge. Much of what is seen from the French King Bridge is part of the Connecticut River Greenway State Park, lands and views protected by the Commonwealth.

Also, Dorsey Road provides an access point to East Mineral Road Bridge, which was recently rehabilitated for bike and pedestrian use (it is not open to vehicles). This, in turn, provides access to the Franklin County Bikeway and a spectacular view of the French King Bridge from below.

Findings
- There are some lands to the south that are not permanently protected. These lands are a priority for protection.
- The French King Bridge has a sidewalk on only one side of the bridge so visitors who would like to experience the spectacular view from the bridge must cross traffic to get to the sidewalk.
- Directional and informational signage could be improved to attract visitors to Millers Falls.

Segment 21
Forest and Farmland/Open Land
In Gill from the rest area on the west side of the French King Bridge to the Barton Cove Recreation Area (mile 20.0 to mile 22.5)

Characteristics
This is a rural stretch of road with farms, forested lands, views of the Barton Cove section of the Connecticut River, some distinctive long views of the River through trees to Montague, farm fields, and farmsteads, and a gently rolling landscape. There are a number of pull offs where travelers could picnic, rest and get a better view of the Connecticut River. There is some commercial and residential development interspersed with the recreational, forest and agricultural lands.

Findings
- Signage could be improved to highlight the rest areas and recreational facilities/access to the Connecticut River and to tie this stretch of the road together. Locally, this part of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway is known as the French King Highway and is closely allied with the Connecticut River historically and recreationally.
Segment 22
Developed Land and Forest
In Gill from Barton Cove Recreation Area to large outcrop with white stanchion (mile 22.5 to mile 23.5)

Characteristics
This section of the Byway has commercial development on the north side of the road and residential development on the south side to the Connecticut River. The historic Turners Falls Bridge crosses the Connecticut River, here, connecting Gill with the Village of Turners Falls in the Town of Montague. Just past the intersection with the Turners Falls Bridge, there is a large pull-off managed by Northeast Utilities. There are remarkable views of the historic mill-Village of Turners Falls in Montague, the Turners Falls Bridge, the Turners Falls hydroelectric dam and canal, and the Connecticut River.

The Great Falls Discovery Center and access to the Canalside Trail, a section of the Franklin County Bikeway, are located just over the bridge in Turners Falls.

Findings
- Along with its history as a planned city like Holyoke and industrial connections with the Connecticut River, Turners Falls has a burgeoning arts and cultural community. For the most part, travelers are unaware of any of the things that can be seen or discovered in the village. Signage along Route 2 and in the community should be improved to highlight the tourist opportunities – Great Falls Discovery Center, Colle Opera House, Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Shea Theatre, Unity Park, Canal Side Trail Bike path, fish ladder and viewing station, etc.
- The pull-off/rest area is in need of repair and upkeep. Fencing to discourage access to the Connecticut River is falling down or has been cut open so people can get to the River and this may present a safety issue.
- There is an opportunity to improve the pull-off and rest area. It could be kept clean, and trails to the River could be improved and made safe for visitors and fishermen. Fencing could be reconfigured to “steer” people to appropriate trails, and viewing platforms could be added to allow the public to see the Connecticut River safely.
- The pull-off and rest area could become a significant interpretive site for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway with signage explaining the significance, geology and history of this National Register Archaeological District for Turners Falls including dinosaur footprints, a gathering spot for Paleo Indians to fish for salmon and shad and cultivate corn, the Turners Falls massacre of Native Americans, Turners Falls Dam and hydropower canal, and the remarkable view of the Connecticut River.
Characteristics
This is a forested drive. Development is “hidden” from view on Factory Hollow Road, which includes the remains of a mill village and historic markers, and a complex of unobtrusive professional buildings on the north side of the road.

Findings
• This is where Route 2 and Route 2A intersect. Route 2 bypasses downtown Greenfield completely and there is little signage to alert or attract visitors to explore or partake in Greenfield’s downtown and hospitality.
• A “big box store” is being proposed near this intersection, which is the gateway to downtown Greenfield.
• Signage to direct travelers downtown and screening of the big box store to minimize impacts to the scenic charm of the gateway to downtown should be provided.
• No sign exists to call attention to the Factory Hollow textile mill and early 1800s housing developed there.

Segment 24
Commercial Development
In Greenfield from the intersection of Route 2, 2A and Adams Road to the Lincoln Street intersection (mile 24.0 to mile 25.5)

Characteristics
This section of Byway is one of two main entrances to downtown Greenfield. It includes scattered commercial and industrial development of auto body shops, a gravel pit, a car wash, farm and garden stores, a supermarket, elder care facility, and police station.

Findings
• Some businesses are in need of renovations and landscaping to make the area more pedestrian and tourist friendly.
• There is no signage alerting the traveler that the central business district is just ahead.
• Just beyond the intersection of Route 2, 2A and Adams Road, there is a very scenic view across the Connecticut River Valley to Canada Hill and the Berkshire Mountains which orients visitors to the landscape. A pull-off could be cre-
ated here to describe the view and also welcome people to downtown Greenfield.

- Greenfield’s commercial, residential, and industrial architecture is quite remarkable. A system of historic signs/markers along the Byway in Greenfield could be developed to highlight and explain Greenfield’s historic architecture and industrial history.

**Segment 25**

**Residential Development**

In Greenfield from the Lincoln Street intersection to the intersection of High Street with Main Street (mile 25.5 to mile 26.5).

**Characteristics**

The predominant characteristic of this portion is the Byway is a residential district of older and historic homes with lawns and gardens. Within this segment, High Street (Route 2A) transitions from an auto oriented commercial area to an older residential neighborhood with tree-lined streets.

Route 2A includes the East Main Street-High Street Historic District, which is bounded by Church, High, East Main and Franklin Streets. The area is pedestrian friendly and is an easy walk to the Main Street business district. The historic Weldon Hotel has been converted to senior housing and a few of the grander homes have become professional buildings.

**Findings**

- The Neo-classical Weldon Hotel, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is a remarkable example of early reinforced concrete construction. It could be highlighted as one of the buildings of the Greenfield historic marker system of signs.

- Travelers are unaware of Poet’s Seat and the remarkable view of the Connecticut River Valley that can be seen from there. Signage could be created to direct visitors to the site.

**Segment 26**

**Village/Town Center**

In Greenfield from the intersection of High Street with Main Street to the Mohawk Mall shops (mile 26.5 to mile 27.5).
Characteristics
This is Greenfield’s downtown. The eastern portion of Main Street from High Street to Chapman Street includes professional buildings in large historic homes; the YMCA and US Post Office, movie theatre and Greenfield Library area; the Town Common surrounded by historic buildings including Town Hall and Bank Row buildings; and the commercial section of town with historic brick buildings of three and four stories. There is a small war memorial park.

From Chapman Street to the Mohawk Mall shops the commercial streetscape changes to one story buildings, which were constructed in the early to mid-20th Century for chain stores, e.g. J.C. Pennys, and now house such businesses as a coffee shop, market, cleaners and bookstore. One building of note, currently a car dealership at the far end of downtown, has unique and historic bas-relief panels depicting “modern” modes of transportation – automobiles, airplanes and trains.

Downtown Greenfield has a lively pedestrian oriented business atmosphere. The Main Street Historic Block is bounded by Main Street at Court Square and Bank Row, Chapman Street and Hope Street. In addition, this section of the Byway travels past 96 buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the First Franklin County Courthouse (15 Bank Row), the First National Bank and Trust (9 Bank Row), Garden Theatre Block (353-367 Main Street), Leavitt-Hovey House (402 Main Street), and the U.S. Post Office – Greenfield Main Branch (442 Main Street).

Findings
- Greenfield is the governmental and commercial center of Franklin County with a historically significant downtown.
- In some instances historic facades and significant architectural fabric/features of downtown are in need of restoration or have been covered over with more contemporary materials that are out of keeping with the historic character of the downtown. Original historic facades could be restored.
- Some commercial buildings in the downtown are in need of repair and upkeep.
- Although the downtown is generally vibrant, at times there is turnover of businesses and vacancies in the store-fronts.
• There appears to be many underutilized upper floors in some of the downtown buildings.¹
• Signage on Main Street could better complimentary the historic character of the community.
• There is a scenic view from the Town Common toward the Deerfield Valley and western hill towns.

Segment 27
Commercial Development
In Greenfield from the Mohawk Mall shops to the rotary and intersection of Routes 2, 2A and I-91 (mile 27.5 to mile 28).

Characteristics
This is a main entrance to/exit from downtown Greenfield and also crosses over the Green River. It is characterized by strip commercial development including gas stations, a hotel/motel, two restaurants (one a national chain; the other a distinctive family owned and operated company), and other businesses. This section of Main Street and the Mohawk Trail is more auto-oriented and less pedestrian friendly.

There are two buildings of note in this section of the Byway. The Newton School is listed on the National Register because its mid-1900s design was revolutionary. It is a one-story school building, not the traditional multi-story structure. Also, the Rugg Factory (ca. 1860) just off the I-91 rotary was at one time the largest rake manufacturing facility in the country. The wooden factory building was built in sections and is unique to see in this day and age because it is one of the few wooden mills that remain.

Findings
• Like the other main entrance/exit to downtown Greenfield, this section of Route 2A does not give or leave the traveler with a sense of the quality and promise of downtown Greenfield.
• Signage should be employed to welcome people to Greenfield, thank them for coming, and alert them to the shopping/eating opportunities in and historic buildings of the downtown. Perhaps, the billboards near the traffic circle could be used for this purpose.
• In some locations there is a lack of sidewalks which often makes it difficult for pedestrians to travels through this area.
• The National Register markers for individual buildings and historic districts are not as visible as they could be.

The character of the eastern section of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway is different than the western part of the Route 2. In ranking the visual segments, FRCOG emphasized the river and industrial heritage of the communities as well as their scenic value.

¹ Legislation and funding might be pursued to remedy the problem in retrofitting buildings with elevators so they can be handicap accessible, similar to the Façade Improvement Loan Program.
Table 1.1: Visual Segment Category and Evaluation – Franklin County Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment Number</th>
<th>Starting/Ending Points</th>
<th>Approx. Length (miles)</th>
<th>Segment Category</th>
<th>Segment Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Athol Route 2 entrance to Route 32, Barre &amp; Petersham</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Residential</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Athol Route 32 Barre, &amp; Petersham sign to Chestnut Street</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Residential</td>
<td>Average to Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Athol Chestnut Street to corner at house &amp; cobble retaining wall</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Developed Land – Industrial &amp; Residential</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Athol Corner at house &amp; cobbled wall to bridge at Raymond Place</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Village/Town Center – Industrial</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Athol Bridge at Raymond Place to out cropping near a business on north side</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Developed Land – Commercial</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Athol Out cropping near a business on north side to just past the Daniel Shays Highway intersection</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Commercial</td>
<td>Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Orange Just past the Daniel Shays Highway intersection to intersection sign</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Commercial</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Orange Intersection sign on right to Wheeler Avenue</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Developed Land – Commercial</td>
<td>Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Orange Wheeler Avenue to Route 2A sign &amp; Library</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Village/Town Center – Commercial</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Orange Route 2A sign &amp; Library to pull-off on north side</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Village/Town Center</td>
<td>Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Orange Pull off on north side of Route 2 to Haskins Road</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Forest &amp; Developed Land – Residential</td>
<td>Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Orange Haskins Road to intersection with Wendell Depot Road</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Residential</td>
<td>Distinctive to Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Orange Wendell Depot Road to Routes 2 &amp; 2A intersection</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Residential &amp; Commercial</td>
<td>Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Erving Route 2 &amp; 2A intersection to Prospect Street</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Industrial &amp; Residential</td>
<td>Noteworthy to Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Erving Prospect Street pedestrian sign</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Village/Town Center – Residential</td>
<td>Noteworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Erving Pedestrian sign to 40 mph sign</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Forest &amp; Developed Land – Residential</td>
<td>Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Erving 40 mph sign to red house on south side</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Residential</td>
<td>Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Erving Red house on south side of byway to building (south side) at big bend near the Prospect Street intersection</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>Average to Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Erving Dorsey Road to west side of French King Bridge</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Gill French King Bridge on west side to Barton Cove Recreation Area</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Forest &amp; Farmland Developed Land – Residential &amp; Commercial</td>
<td>Distinctive to Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Erving Building (south side) at big bend near the Prospect Street intersection to Dorsey Road</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Developed Land – Residential &amp; Commercial</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues

- Roadway features such as guardrails and utility lines sometimes detract from the scenic qualities of the roadway (galvanize verses Cor-Ten steel).
- Historically significant buildings are in needs of repair and restoration.
- Scenic views of the Millers River are sometimes blocked by vegetation that has become overgrown.
- Downtown Greenfield, Orange and Athol are historic and would greatly benefit from continued revitalization efforts.
- Strip commercial development detracts from the scenic quality of the byway.
- The industrial heritage of the region is significant and should be highlighted.

Recommendations

Historically, the scenic and natural resources of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway – the rugged forested hillsides and the Millers, Connecticut and Green Rivers – were central to the development of its communities and the region as a whole. The rivers powered the mills that transformed local timber and other natural resources into products that in turn fueled the economy of the region and helped towns to prosper.

With the advent of the automobile, the scenic vistas and natural resources of the area and the historic structures of the industrial era spawned the new economies of auto-tourism and outdoor recreation. As such, the recommendations that follow not only suggest that the towns preserve these resources, but “use” them to promote the area, renew their downtowns, and build the region’s tourist/recreational economy.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Many of the recommendations of the Scenic Resources Chapter overlap with those found in other chapters of the Corridor Management Plan. This is intentional since scenic, historic and natural resources are community assets that serve economic, recreational, educational and inspirational purposes.
ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Continued

- Identify views along the Byway that are a priority for protection for the communities.
- Acquire conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs) or fee interest in scenic, agricultural or natural lands from willing land owners to permanently protect and create important vistas along the Byway.
- Implement selective pruning to open vistas that have become blocked by overgrown vegetation.
- Explore and seek options for funding to implement downtown/main street revitalization efforts and to assist property owners with the restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance of architecturally and historically significant buildings.
- Seek ways to improve informational signage to: highlight points of interest, both on and off the Byway; alert travelers to important historic, cultural and natural features; and attract travelers to the downtown commercial districts of Athol, Orange, Erving, Millers Falls, Turners Falls, Gill and Greenfield.
- Encourage commercial establishments to use landscaping, signage, and building designs that complement the rural, natural, historic and scenic quality of the Mohawk Trail.
- Promote signage and façade improvements and restoration that enhance the distinctive quality of each of the town centers, tie each streetscape together, improve the historic character of the buildings in each town, and help communities market their businesses and village centers.
- Encourage Byway towns to improve their site plan review bylaws to foster development that is sensitive to the natural, scenic and historic features of the Byway.
- Create model sign bylaws that can be adopted by towns that encourage signage of a design and scale that enhances and distinguishes town centers and complements the scenic quality of the Trail.
- Consider the adoption of local zoning overlay districts for the Scenic Byway corridor that include additional design standards to help preserve the Scenic Byway, and create model byway overlay zoning district bylaws for use by towns.
- Create a Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway Primer for towns that includes design guidelines for buildings, façade improvements and restoration ideas, main street revitalization tools, and model bylaws.
- Establish a regional main street revitalization program for communities along the Byway. Seek funding to develop town tours and activity guides, waypoint information centers, and a signage and kiosk program for the entire Byway that highlights its distinctive historical, natural, and scenic areas and promotes the region’s town centers and recreational opportunities.
- Create a web site, brochures/pamphlets, maps and kiosks with traveler information about points of interest in Byway communities.
- Link the informational materials and web site for the Mohawk Trail East Scenic Byway with tourism web sites and web sites for area towns, organizations, and events.
- Implement and complete riverfront park and trail development to highlight the Millers, Connecticut and Green Rivers and provide residents and visitors alike with recreational opportunities.
- Improve existing turn-out areas to enhance their safety, utility, and signage.
- Establish new safe turn-out sites at ecological, architectural, historic and scenic locations to allow travelers to stop and enjoy views, read historic, informational signage and markers, and access the recreational opportunities of the Millers, Connecticut and Green Rivers, and trail and parks along the Byway.
- Encourage the use of transportation infrastructure and roadside utilities (guardrails, retaining walls and telecommunications facilities) that are sensitive to the scenic nature of the Byway.