



Developing a Corridor Management Plan for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway

BRPC is currently partnering with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to develop a Corridor Management Plan for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. The overall purpose of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway corridor project is to recognize, interpret, preserve and promote the unique scenic, cultural, archeological, natural and recreational resources of the historic Mohawk Trail in Franklin and Berkshire Counties through the development of a Corridor Management Plan and accompanying public participation process.

The Scenic Byway

The Mohawk Trail of western Massachusetts, also known as state highway Route 2, was one of the earliest Scenic Byways in New England, receiving its designation in 1953. The corridor is rich in natural, cultural and archeological resources, and historic villages and structures. It also includes some of the most beautiful scenic areas in Massachusetts. The Mohawk Trail is already an extremely popular auto-touring route during the Fall Foliage season.

The Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway corridor includes the communities of Greenfield, Shelburne, Buckland and Charlemont in Franklin County; and Savoy, Florida, Clarksburg, North Adams and Williamstown in Berkshire County. The Study area includes Route 2 and a one-half mile buffer strip along each side of the road. The total length of the Byway is approximately 41 miles, with 22 miles in Franklin county and 19 miles in Berkshire County.



What is a Scenic Byway?

A scenic byway is a route that people generally enjoy traveling and that reflects the intrinsic qualities of an area. The intrinsic qualities can be forests and mountains, communities, historic landmarks, or recreation resources for which the area is known. A byway can consist of one or more roads, and include rural or developed areas. Designating a route as a scenic byway can help residents plan how to preserve what they like best about it for the future and makes it eligible for additional grant funds. [LINK HERE TO www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)

Corridor Management Plan

A Corridor Management Plan is a tool that provides an inventory and assessment of important resources and articulates specific strategies and actions designed to achieve identified and measurable results. In order to get to specific actions it is important that the common direction of the Byway be stated. This is done through the use of a Vision Statement, which is a broad statement that identifies an ideal that everyone can agree with. As a way to initiate discussion, the following is the draft Vision Statement for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway:

“The Mohawk Trail is an historic and scenic travel corridor that provides travelers and local residents access to abundant natural, recreational and cultural opportunities as well as regional commerce. Promoted as a scenic automobile-touring route as far back as the early 1900’s, the road was one of the earliest in America to receive a scenic byway designation. Our vision is to expand economic opportunities along the Byway, particularly related to heritage and recreational tourism, while preserving the unique scenic qualities, natural resources and historic structures and communities that prompted its designation as a scenic byway in 1953.”



Draft list of Goals

- Preserve the rural scenic character of the corridor and important viewsheds
- Protect the character of historic districts and village centers along the corridor
- Preserve and enhance the natural resources along the route
- Promote a low impact approach to tourism based on recreational, historic and cultural resources which minimizes traffic congestion
- Promote greater awareness of the Byway and its recreational, historic, and cultural resources
- Promote safety measures for roadway users including motorists, pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles
- Enhance transportation safety, efficiency and comfort, without compromising the rural qualities of the roadway.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of recreational experiences available to Byway users.
- Increase universal accessibility to recreation areas and associated facilities
- Explore appropriate design standards for commercial development along the Byway

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

Public Participation

Throughout the development of the Corridor Management Plan, BRPC and FRCOG are working with local citizens on the Mohawk Scenic Byway Advisory Committee to identify the most important aspects of the Scenic Byway and to develop a plan of action to protect and improve the experience of traveling the byway. This Committee is made up of private citizens and local officials who have an interest in the future management of the byway. If you would be interested in participating on this committee, please contact BRPC staff member, Lauren Gaherty.

