

# **Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan**

## **Task 15: Management Strategy Plan**

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# 1. Introduction

Preceding reports developed for the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Corridor Management Plan project have laid the foundation for creating a strategy plan for management of the corridor. These previous plans have articulated an overall vision and goals, identified, mapped and assessed intrinsic qualities, documented acknowledged and potential issues, and revealed opportunities for preserving and enhancing the corridor while providing access to its resources and allowing desired and directed growth. This report creates a management strategy plan by synthesizing what we have learned and organizing it into a set of priority objectives, ideas and opportunities, and makes general recommendations for realizing the corridor's vision. The report also discusses future byway development, outlines the elements to be further expanded on in the Implementation Plan (Task 18), and discusses the benefits of and strategies for developing scenic roads.

## 2. Priority Objectives

The priority objectives of this Management Strategy Plan are based on the Vision Statement and Goals developed in Task 1 of the Corridor Management Plan project.

- Preserve, protect, maintain and enhance the natural, historic and scenic qualities of the byway

This is the fundamental purpose of the corridor management plan and provides a touchstone for each action. In effect, we ask the question “will this action preserve, protect, maintain or enhance the intrinsic qualities of the byway” for each action that is recommended. An action must provide or lead to one of these benefits, either directly or indirectly.

- Provide interpretation in a variety of ways to reach a diverse audience.

While the intrinsic qualities of the byway need no explanation for some visitors to enjoy the resources it has to offer, in order to engage a more diverse audience, the plan must create a framework of storytelling or information dissemination that is convenient to find, to use and to understand. This will mean different things to different people so a single interpretive strategy will not be effective. The byway user, whether searching for a recreational adventure, to capture the essence of a moment in history, or to appreciate the perfection of a migratory flight, should be given the choice of a variety of interpretation tools or opportunities that make the landscape and its qualities approachable and comprehensible.

- Strengthen the byway’s regional identity.

The Pinelands is an internationally acknowledged ecosystem and resource, yet locally may be undervalued and credited. The corridor management plan will seek to heighten awareness and understanding of the region’s attributes to facilitate appropriate land use choices, foster local pride, increase stewardship, and create a known, marketable identity.

- Create a framework for sustainable partnerships

Creating a Corridor Management Plan is an initial step in the development of a scenic byway corridor but has no purpose without implementation and is only truly effective with on-going evaluation and adaptation. Implementation will require a significant and dedicated work force committed to partnering to bring about and sustain the desired vision.

- Support local economies based on natural, historic and recreational resources.

Commercial activities, products or services that harvest or use the natural, historic, and recreational resources of the byway region should be encouraged and supported. These activities, products or services provide employment for residents, diversify the tax base of municipalities, meet the needs of byway users, and help strengthen the identity of the region by highlighting and reinforcing the connection between the resources being used and the region.

- Increase physical and visual access to corridor resources.

Only by increasing the awareness of and access to the byway's assets will the corridor realize its potential to engage and delight its visitors. Increasing access can include opening viewsheds through pruning vegetation, enhancing visibility through framing and orienting strategies, by increasing the number of trail heads and parking facilities, and by improving or developing new trails, signage, viewing platforms, and boat ramps. Increasing the visibility and accessibility also includes marketing and interpretation in a variety of formats for the most diverse audience.

- Create, expand, and enhance recreational networks.

A critical mass of recreational facilities, trails and services is desired to strengthen the byway's draw as a recreational destination. Increasing the number, size and connectivity of these will help develop a more comprehensive network with the capacity to provide a greater diversity and intensity of recreational experiences. More structured and integrated networks could allow users to combine activities such as hiking and boating, biking or camping and allow service providers to target a larger market base than a single use trail or facility.

- Create and expand promotion of resources, services and facilities.

The Comprehensive Management Plan will outline the strategies, and recommend specific actions for marketing and tourism. It will analyze opportunities that exist based on intrinsic qualities, and existing services and facilities and will lay out a framework for increasing opportunities through a thematic approach to interpretation, developing stronger partnerships that integrate interpretation and marketing, and strategically supporting capital improvements and economic development that advances the byway's vision.

- Prevent or minimize negative effects of transportation, visitor use, and development

Transportation and circulation, an increase in visitor activity, and economic development are all desired components along select areas of the scenic byway, though each has the potential to negatively affect its intrinsic qualities if not carefully considered and implemented. The Corridor Management Plan is focused on both preventing and mitigating unintended impacts, and supporting the appropriate existing and future uses and development.

- Promote a holistic approach to planning

The goals of the scenic byway will be realized only through a holistic planning approach that considers the varied objectives of multiple municipalities, land owners and managers, service providers, advocates and other stakeholders and coordinates or integrates their interests and capacities to achieve viable planning tools. Holistic planning seeks to exploit the cross pollination of ideas to develop creative initiatives and solutions.

These objectives, supported by the plan's recommended actions, will provide the components necessary for a scenic byway that is integrated into the fabric of the region and its communities and provides outstanding traveler experiences specific to and sensitive of the uncommon resources which it honors and to which it provides access.

### 3. Ideas and Opportunities

An important aspect of the Management Strategy Plan is to explore ideas and opportunities for preventing, directing and or implementing changes to the land and water resources, infrastructure, and management policies and practices along the scenic byway, in order to meet the objectives of the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail. These ideas and opportunities are discussed below under four headings: Land Use and Development; Roadways and Roadsides; Scenic, Heritage and Recreational Tourism; and National and New Jersey Scenic Byway Program Considerations. However, there is considerable overlap and integration among these topic areas, reflecting the opportunities and benefits of holistic planning and highlighting the need for sustainable partnerships.

#### Land Use and Development

New Jersey and the Pinelands have a long and strong history of land preservation efforts resulting in extensive public ownership of lands along the byway. However, it is important to **continue to identify and prioritize land for conservation and preservation** as land uses change and development occurs. Lands that may be identified should include those that provide connections to other parks, trails and open spaces, provide water quality protection, enhance community park systems, preserve viewsheds or provide buffers.

While natural resource protection is a primary goal, development along areas of the byway corridor is both inevitable and desirable. It has the potential to improve local economies and enhance traveler services; however, without careful planning, permitting, and construction, development can have unintended consequences. Municipalities can do a great deal to affect development and assure that it provides the benefits they desire and prevents or mitigates negative impacts. **Smart growth** policies and strategies should be used as the basis for evaluating and revising zoning and land use regulations to guide and support development. At the site level, plans should be fully informed by utilizing context sensitive design principles aimed at seamless integration.

Smart growth encourages growth in areas that already sustain development, have supportive infrastructure and provide opportunities for reducing travel between facilities or services. These criteria point to **village centers and commercial corridors** as the most suitable sites for expansion of municipal, commercial and residential facilities. As target areas for further growth, these centers and corridors should be studied comprehensively to determine how to support this growth most effectively. Land use regulations, policies and infrastructure should all work together.

#### Roadways and Roadsides

Roadways and roadsides are the domain of America's byways, being the most consistent element travelers interact with along their journey. Roadways and roadsides play a heightened role when the byway has limited topography and long range views, as the travelers attention is focused solely on what is within the limited range of sight. It is critical that roadways and roadsides offer a pleasant experience, without which even the most extraordinary resources are diminished.

## Design Considerations

The scenic byway should have a **distinct and uniform design vocabulary** that is consistent throughout the corridor and addresses infrastructure materials, layout, design, application and maintenance standards. This design vocabulary should place primary importance on limiting impact on both the visual and physical disturbance of the natural environment rather than bringing attention to the design itself. It should reflect the balance of a manicured and a natural environment, providing flexibility to allow for design cohesion whether in built up town centers or along rural wooded ways.

Signs are a significant element of roadway and roadside infrastructure and should be addressed immediately and strategically. Byway signs for wayfinding and interpretation will add another layer of signage throughout the corridor and are expected to be created and coordinated through a comprehensive sign plan. (See Task 13: Sign Plan.) Outdoor advertising represents another type of sign that is prevalent along the byway and has a substantial impact on the visual quality of the roadside in limited areas. A strategy for **monitoring and controlling outdoor advertising** should be developed among the 16 municipalities along the byway. The strategy should develop an approach to outdoor advertising that recognizes the importance of advertising in commercial zones and honors the tranquility of nature outside those areas. While state and federal laws in place give broad guidance to outdoor advertising to ensure public safety and limit some negative impacts, local regulations provide substantial opportunities to affect the design, placement and amount of outdoor advertising and therefore the character of the byways roadsides.

Regulatory signs which are independent of byway signage and outdoor advertising are one of the most frequent features along the byway route. These publicly owned and managed signs are the property and responsibility of federal, state, county and municipal agencies. Their placement, design and maintenance should be reviewed and a framework should be developed for **improving the visual and functional quality of the signs** that meets the needs of each stakeholder involved. (See Task 10: Transportation Safety & Accident Record Study and Task 12: Assessment of Visual Quality Impacts)

## Transportation Issues

The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail should seek to **increase connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians** throughout the corridor to increase user safety and enjoyment. Increasing the connections of existing trails, lanes and sidewalks will create opportunities for more people to experience the byway in a close and personal way. Stepping outside one's car to explore the intrinsic qualities of the byway is a critical step to understanding and appreciation. Greater connectivity of trails or access ways may also increase the likelihood of longer trips, opening up new opportunities for increased services.

While the car is likely to remain the transportation mode of choice for most byway users, the SPNHT should **study the potential for enhanced transit services**. Effective transit services could assist in reducing seasonal traffic congestion along various segments of the byway.

Trucks along the byway have not been noted as significant with the exception of along US Route 9 in Tuckerton. The SPNHT should **assess potential amendments to the NJ Access Code (trucks) at the request of municipalities** to address current issues and assure long term cooperation and coordination with commercial trucking interests.

## Scenic, Heritage, and Recreational Tourism

The intrinsic qualities of the Southern Pinelands Scenic Heritage Trail Corridor must be both accessible and understandable in order to sustain a successful scenic byway and realize the benefits that come from that success.

Creating awareness that a desirable resource or experience is available and establishing a system for being able to reach it easily and efficiently are critical steps of a Corridor Management Plan. The Marketing Plan (to be developed in Task 17) will make recommendations for **creating or enhancing awareness of the byways intrinsic qualities**. Strategies for assessing the byway's resources include enhancing visual access through vegetation management, view framing, and buffering elements that have a negative impact on views. Visual access can also be achieved through turnoffs that bring cars off the roadway and direct travelers attention to particular resources, viewing platforms that elevate and orient viewers, and boardwalks or other elevated walkways that allow travelers to enter fragile ecosystems that could otherwise not handle the impact of visitors. Improved signage at existing resource areas and trailheads, an increased number of trails, and improved and additional boat ramps are other strategies recommended for **increasing access**.

**Interpretation** moves the visitor from simply an awareness of a resource to understanding it, at whatever level of understanding they chose. The Interpretation Plan (Task 14 report) outlines in detail the steps that should be taken to create an experience within or along the corridor through the thoughtful interpretation of the corridor's distinctive and unique resources. It makes recommendations for improving access to sites and resources, and develops a framework for interpretation that links the resources into a compelling story. The plan notes that there is a limited range of interpretive tools along the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Corridor, with the exception of Batsto Sate Park which has a multi-media visitor center, cell phone audio tours, signed trails and costumed interpreters. Interpretation at all other sites is limited to written signs or panels. Therefore, the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail must find ways to get people out of their cars or find ways to bring the subtle qualities of this region into the car via audio or written materials. People must be taken to the places that offer distinctive demarcations between habitats, to places that are well interpreted and to experiences that enmesh the traveler in the quiet of this place (e.g., canoeing a cedar swamp).

The Tourism Plan, to be developed in Task 16, will explore how intrinsic qualities provide opportunities for supporting **services and economic development**, and will expand the discussion of **enhancing recreational opportunities** along the byway.

## State and National Scenic Byway Program Considerations

The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail has been designated as a New Jersey Scenic Byway under the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program. One of the conditions of this designation is that a corridor management plan be prepared for the byway.

In addition to being a requirement of the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program, completing a corridor management plan is also a prerequisite for designation under the National Scenic Byways Program. National designation includes the route in national and international tourism marketing programs, and gives the route added priority for NSBP grant funding for roadway



improvements, visitor facilities, signage, interpretation and marketing (eligibility criteria and requirements for NSBP grant funding are summarized in the Appendix).

The New Jersey and National Scenic Byways Programs have different standards and requirements for corridor management plans, and this plan is being developed to satisfy both sets of requirements.

Once the CMP is completed, long-term management of the byway must ensure that the Scenic Byway continues to **coordinate with state and national scenic byway program requirements**. This is important for the byway to maintain its designation; remain eligible for byway funding grants; and coordinate with other state and national scenic byways and related organizations to share resources and partner on potential grant opportunities. Under both the state and national programs, failure to implement the corridor management plan or to protect the byway’s qualities could result in de-designation.

The corridor planning process has included a number of tasks, each documented in a separate report. The following two tables summarize the primary requirements and considerations for both the State and National Scenic Byway Programs and indicate how the information developed in the individual task reports will be incorporated into the final Corridor Management Plan.

### NJ Scenic Byway Program Requirements

<b>Corridor Management Plan Requirements</b>	<b>How these are being addressed</b>
Scenic inventory	Task 3: Intrinsic Qualities Task 5: Physical Survey Task 6: Visual Survey Task 8: Byway Segment Ratings
Long term management and maintenance recommendations	“General Recommendations” in this report. These will also be addressed as part of Task 18.
Viewshed management (including land use)	“General Recommendations” in this report.
Economic benefits	“General Recommendations” in this report. This will also be addressed as part of Task 16.
Funding needs and sources	“Future Byway Development” in this report.

### National Scenic Byway Program

<b>Corridor Management Plan requirements</b>	<b>How these are being addressed</b>
Map identifying corridor boundaries, location of intrinsic qualities, different land uses.	Mapping completed under Task 4.
Assessment of intrinsic qualities.	Task 3: Intrinsic Qualities – inventory and assessment

<b>Corridor Management Plan requirements</b>	<b>How these are being addressed</b>
Strategy for maintaining and enhancing intrinsic qualities (focus on traveler safety and comfort as well as visual integrity and attractiveness).	“General Recommendations” in this report.
Schedule and list of responsible parties for implementing the CMP, description of enforcement and review mechanisms, schedule for review that responsibilities are being met.	“Implementation Plan Outline” in this report. This will be developed further as part of Task 18.
Strategy for how existing development might be enhanced and new development accommodated—design review, zoning, easements, and economic incentives.	“General Recommendations” in this report.
Plan for on-going public participation.	“Implementation Plan Outline” in this report. The public participation component will be developed further as part of Task 18.
Review of safety and accident record.	Task 10: Transportation Safety and Accident Record Study
Plan to accommodate commerce while maintaining safe and efficient level of highway service and convenient user facilities.	“General Recommendations” in this report. Will also be addressed as part of Task 16.
Minimize intrusions on visitor experience and plan for visitor enhancements.	“General Recommendations” in this report. Will also be addressed in Tasks 14 and 16.
Demonstrate compliance with local, state, and federal laws for control of outdoor advertising.	Task 12: Assessment of Visual Quality Impacts
Signage plan.	Task 13: Signage Plan
Narrative for marketing.	To be addressed in Task 17: Marketing Plan
Roadway Design standards.	Task 11: Transportation Plan
Interpretation	Task 14: Interpretation Plan

## 4. General Recommendations

This section presents an outline of recommended corridor management strategies to be considered for inclusion in the final Corridor Management Plan. The strategies are described in general terms and are presented in six categories:

- Corridor Aesthetics,
- Environmental Issues and Impacts,
- Traffic Capacity and Safety,
- Visitor Information and Services,
- Land Use and Development, and
- Byway Management Partnerships.

Within each category, the actions are further grouped in a general sequence of priority, as short-term (to be initiated within 3 years after adoption of the CMP), medium-term (within 6 years) and long-term (more than 6 years). The Implementation Plan (Task 18) will refine the list of strategies and priorities.

### Corridor Aesthetics

#### Short Term (within 3 years)

- Identify areas with highest need for protection and outline strategies including acquisition, restriction, restoration or enhanced maintenance,
- Identify areas for potential view shed development or enhancement and create standards for maintenance including thinning vegetation, framing, buffering etc.
- Establish and maintain a natural road edge (stripe pavement edge and clear vegetation as appropriate) in all but urban areas
- Minimize overhead utilities to the extent feasible

#### Medium Term (within 6 years)

- Develop design standards for buildings to include scale, material, articulation and compatibility
- Standardize naturalized guardrails (replace existing when feasible with distinctive/rustic guardrail)
- Implement streetscape improvements that help create social environments and visual continuity from village to village
- Create a framework for increasing the tree canopy within towns and villages to enhance scale, comfort and aesthetics
- Develop an approach to standardize lighting respecting the dark sky initiative

### Environmental Issues

#### Short Term (within 3 years)

- Identify sites where environmental restoration (invasive plant removal, bank stabilization and others) is needed and develop a timeline and implementation plan for undertaking such efforts

### **Medium Term (within 6 years)**

- Increase coordination and participation with public and private groups to assist municipalities in meeting local open space and recreation goals

### **Long Term (within 10 years)**

- Create a culture of environmental awareness and stewardship that engages a variety of stakeholders to control and eliminate invasive plant species and increase public and private plantings of appropriate native species

## **Traffic Capacity and Safety**

### **Short Term (within 3 years)**

- Expand bicycle and multi-use where applicable
- Develop/maintain clear zones for safety
- Set speed limits as low as practical
- Limit curb cuts to the greatest extent possible

### **Medium Term (within 6 years)**

- Increase shoulder widths to the extent possible
- Enhance intersections by using dotted lines to help bicyclists navigate safely
- Create crosswalks that are distinctive and uniform throughout the corridor

### **Long Term (within 10 years)**

- Use traffic calming measures where reduced speeds or enhanced safety measurements are needed

## **Visitor Information and Services**

### **Short Term (within 3 years)**

- Establish a SPNHT byway sign review board to discuss and make recommendations for improved signage along the byway route
- Investigate options to improve safety warning while minimizing sign clutter
- Establish byway gateway points
- Develop a comprehensive signage plan/manual

### **Medium Term (within 6 years)**

- Focus efforts on encouraging travelers to “come closer” as many of the byways intrinsic qualities remain hidden to those who remain in their cars
- Standardize installation and compatibility among signs
- Develop a comprehensive and coordinated wayfinding/interpretation/promotion system
- Standardized signage (reduce clutter, paint backs, consistent design and use)
- Reduce redundant, excessive and unnecessary signage
  - Establish a minimum distance between signs

- Remove “adopt-a-highway” signs and replace with recognition in byway publication or at waysides and pulloffs.
- Redesign and minimize signs prohibiting specific activities
- Develop a TODS program to enhance visitor awareness of resources and facilities
- Work with public schools to coordinate curricula on history and environment with the Interpretive Plan
- Develop a standard practice for posting byway wayfinding signs
- Establish guidance for sign aesthetics/visual quality

### **Long Term (within 10 years)**

- Increase and improve site panels at identified locations
- Assure that primary information centers meet the needs of a diverse audience
- Create a diversity of interpretive tools including site furnishings, maps, brochures and guides, curricula, events, web sites, and downloadable information for iPods, cell phones and GPS systems
- Consider ways to involve local businesses in interpreting the area’s resources, such as by creating restaurant placemats with maps and information

## **Land Use and Development**

### **Short Term (within 3 years)**

- Plan to accommodate commerce while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service, including convenient user facilities
- Identify strategies for enhancing existing development and accommodating new development while preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor

### **Medium Term (within 6 years)**

- Establish consistent site design and performance standards for parking lots, buffering, tree canopy, connectivity, pedestrian accessibility and landscaping

### **Long Term (within 10 years)**

- Create village zoning that adheres to smart growth principles, creating a more dense and walkable village center

## **Byway Management Partnerships**

### **Short Term (within 3 years)**

- Establish a byway management organization representing all stakeholder groups, to be responsible for monitoring and supporting actions for byway protection, enhancement, marketing and promotion
- Develop a list of project partners for priority projects, and revisit the list as projects are completed

### **Medium Term (within 6 years)**

- Develop a web of partnerships that support like causes to increase opportunities for interpreting and marketing

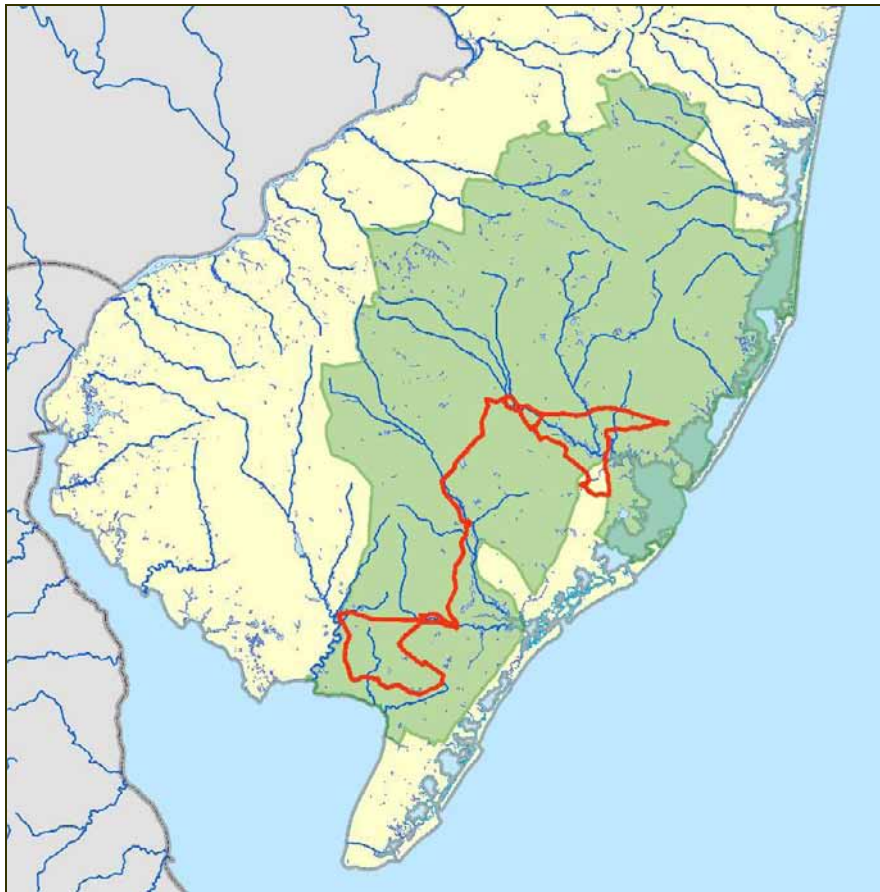
- Engage educators to enhance local awareness and appreciation
- Create a framework that encourages stakeholders to build off each others' successes so that one successful project leads to another
- Establish events that span the byway and engage a diversity of stakeholders

## 5. Future Byway Development

### Potential Byway Extensions and Links

As its name indicates, the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail traverses the southern half of the Pinelands National Reserve, providing access to the region's three largest river systems – the Mullica-Batsto, Wading-Oswego, and Great Egg Harbor-Tuckahoe – as well as to the central and southern coastal areas. Figure 1 shows the general location of the scenic byway within the Pinelands National Reserve.

**Figure 1: The Pinelands National Reserve  
(with the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail)**



By marketing, promoting and enhancing the southern Pinelands region and better interpreting its intrinsic qualities, the scenic byway will increase awareness of the area's significant resources and support local economies. However, the current route can tell only half of the story of this region, and an extension northward is under consideration.

## Potential Northern Byway Extension

Figure 2 shows the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail and a potential route for this northern extension. The new byway route would include the following links:

- CR 539 between US 9 (Tuckerton) and NJ 70 (Whiting)
- NJ 70 between Whiting and CR 530 (Lakehurst Road)
- CR 530 (Lakehurst Road - Juliustown Road - Pemberton Browns Mills Road) between NJ 70 and CR 646 (Springfield Road, New Lisbon)
- CR 646 (Springfield Road and Four Mile Road) between New Lisbon and Four Mile Circle (NJ 70 and NJ 72)
- NJ 72 between Four Mile Circle and CR 563
- CR 563 between NJ 72 and CR 542 (Green Bank)

The natural and recreational intrinsic qualities of this northern extension are equal in significance to those of the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail. A major portion of the northern route is within state forests: CR 563 passes through Wharton State Forest; and both NJ 70 and NJ 72 pass through Brendan T. Byrne (Lebanon) State Forest. The route also crosses the Batona Trail three times (on NJ 70, NJ 72 and CR 563) and provides access to the Wading River.

The importance of extending the scenic byway northwards is underscored by the shaded areas in Figure 2, representing two categories of Pinelands Management Areas: the Preservation Area and the Forest Area. These areas are described by the Pinelands Commission as follows:<sup>1</sup>

**Preservation Area:** This is the heart of the Pinelands environment and is the most critical ecological region. It is a large, contiguous wilderness-like area of forest that supports diverse plant and animal communities and is home to many threatened and endangered species. With preservation the primary goal, the principal permitted uses include the culture of berries and native plants, forestry, fish and wildlife management, low intensity recreational uses, some limited housing defined as cultural housing and agricultural employee housing accessory to an active agricultural operation.

**Forest Area:** Similar to the Preservation Area in terms of ecological value; this is a largely undeveloped area that is an essential element of the Pinelands environment. The most restricted lands within the Pinelands are designated as Forest Areas.

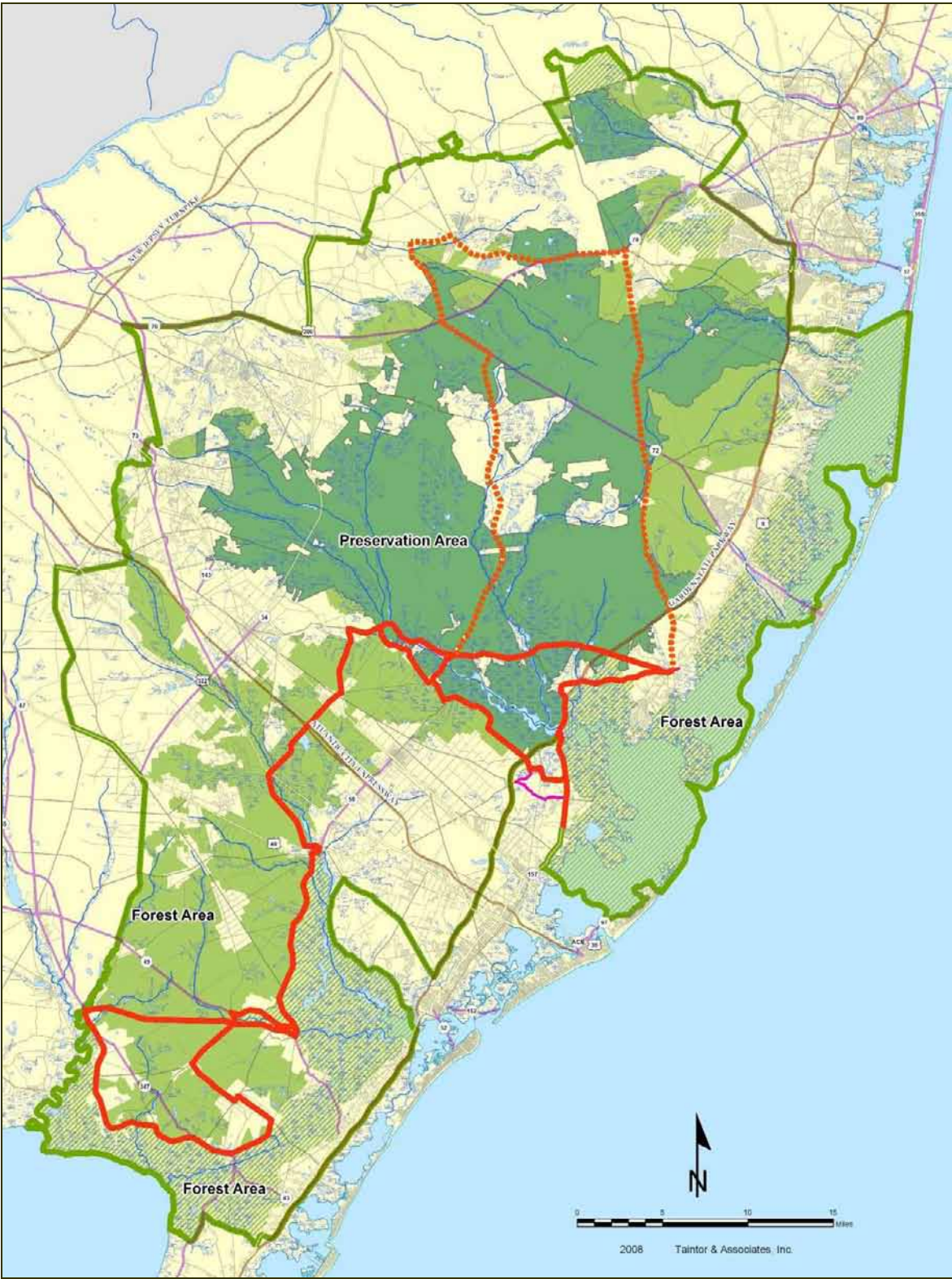
As “the heart of the Pinelands environment” the Preservation Area is central to the visitor’s experience and understanding of this region. However, the current scenic byway route passes through the Preservation Area only in the Mullica River corridor; most of the route is within the Forest Area. The northern extension, particularly along CR 563 from Green Bank through Jenkins and Chatsworth north to NJ 72, provides significant Pinelands landscapes and resources that are not found in the southern route, including pygmy pine forests and extensive cranberry bogs.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/cmp/ma/>



**Figure 2: Pinelands National Reserve with Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail and Potential Northern Extension**



The proposed northern extension would link to the current route in two places: at the junction of CR 542 and CR 563 in Green Bank, and at the junction of US 9 and CR 539 in Tuckerton. The extension would thus be convenient to the two major interpretive centers along the existing byway route, Batsto Village and Tuckerton Seaport. In addition, this proposed northern route passes the Pinelands Commission headquarters in New Lisbon, with its additional interpretive and educational opportunities, and Whitesbog Village, “the birthplace of the cultivated blueberry” and an important visitor attraction and interpretive site.

Finally, this potential northern extension of the byway passes through four Pinelands Villages (Chatsworth, Jenkins, New Lisbon and Warren Grove) and one Pinelands Town (Whiting).

### **Side Routes to Attractions**

In addition to an extension of the official scenic byway, side routes could be designated to direct travelers to significant natural, recreational or historic resources. One example would be a side loop connecting Chatsworth and Batsto to Atsion, an important recreation center in Wharton State Forest. Starting in Chatsworth, this loop would follow CR 532 (Chatsworth Road) and CR 648 west to US 206; turn south on US 206 through Lower Forge and Atsion; and then south and east along CR 613 (Middle Road), CR 693 (Columbia Road) and CR 542 (Nesco Road) back to the byway in Nesco.

Consideration might also be given to identifying less formal side routes to sites that offer existing or potential visitor attractions, but for which a re-routing of the byway may not be feasible or advisable. Two such sites have been identified during the planning process. Richland Village in Buena Vista Township contains several points of interest, including the terminus of the Cape May Scenic Railroad; and the village of Dorothy has a museum of local history as well as being the municipal government center of Weymouth Township.

## **Funding Sources**

Improvements to the scenic byway corridor will take many forms and understanding the potential funding sources will relate directly to the type of improvement sought. Below is a list of potential funding sources organized by type of improvement, with the name of the funding initiative and or the funding agency in parenthesis. Complete information on each source can be found easily on the web.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian (transportation)**
  - Locally Initiated Bicycle Projects (NJ Department of Transportation)
  - Locally Initiated Pedestrian Projects (NJ Department of Transportation)
  - New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety (NJDLPS)
  - Recreational Trails Program (FHWA – RTP)
  - Bicycles and Pedestrian Paths (FWHA- BPP)
  
- **Roadways/Transportation**
  - Surface Transportation Program (FHWA – STP)
  - Scenic Byways (NJ Department of Transportation, SAFETEA-LU)
  - National Scenic Byways (FHWA – NSB)
  - Transportation Enhancements (NJ Department of Transportation)

- **Community**
  - Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA – TSCP)
  - Context Sensitive Design (NJ Department of Transportation SAFETEA-LU)
  - Centers of Place (NJ Department of Transportation)
  - Mobility and Community Form (NJ Department of Transportation)
  - Community Forestry Program (NJ Department of Environmental Protection)
  - NJ Casino Reinvestment Development
  - Smart Growth Planning Grants (NJ – Department of Community Affairs)
  - Municipal Development Impact Fees
  
- **Parks**
  - State Lands Stewardship Investment Fund
  - The Federal Recreational Trails Program (FWHA)
  
- **Historic and Cultural Resources**
  - Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund
  - The New Jersey Cultural Trust Capital Historic Preservation Grants Program
  - Historic Preservation Fund Grants-In-Aid (National Park Service, Department of the Interior)
  
- **Wildlife and Habitat**
  - Wetlands Reserve Program (USDA – NRCS)
  - Environmental Education Grant Program (EPA -EEG)
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA – NRCS)
  - New Jersey Green Acres Program (NJDEP)
  - New Jersey Conservation Foundation
  - New Jersey Trust for Public Lands
  - New Jersey Ducks Unlimited
  - New Jersey Trout Unlimited
  - Nature Conservancy of New Jersey
  
- **County Resources for Environmental Preservation**
  - Atlantic County (\$10,200,000)
  - Burlington County (\$18,762,000)
  - Cape May County (\$4,500,000)
  - Cumberland County (\$811,000)
  - Ocean County (\$12,386,000)
  
- **National Environmental Charitable Organizations**
  - Keep America Beautiful-N.O.
  - National Arbor Day Foundation
  
- **Education**
  - State Environmental Education Directory (NJDEP – SEEDS)

## Municipal Master Plan Recommendations

Regional cooperation and local commitment to the goals of the Corridor Management Plan will result in a unified byway corridor that is capable of delighting travelers and meeting the social, environmental, and economical needs of byway communities. When updating local master plans, municipalities should consult the Corridor Management Plan's recommendations to determine how they can best adapt their local plans to support the strategic planning in place for the byway. For example, each master plan should:

- Identify open space areas with the highest need for protection and outline strategies including acquisition or restriction
- Identify sites where environmental restoration (invasive plant removal, bank stabilization and others) is needed and develop a timeline and implementation plan for undertaking such efforts
- Recognize the desire to increase the number and connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian trails and systems, and identify existing and potential opportunities to do so
- Identify opportunities for increasing access to waterways and other local resources
- Recommend the development of design standards for buildings to include scale, material, articulation and compatibility
- Recommend the development of site design and performance standards for parking lots, buffering, connectivity, pedestrian accessibility and landscaping
- Recommend comprehensive sign regulations that are consistent with the design, installation and maintenance guidelines of the Byway Corridor Signage Plan/Manual
- Advocate for a Low Impact Development ordinance to lighten the impact of development on natural resources and address stormwater management issues at the site level
- Recommend village zoning that adheres to smart growth principles, creating a more dense, walkable and attractive village center that provides a variety of housing options and alleviates pressure for development outside village centers
- Identify capital improvements that will help the byway achieve a unified identity or aesthetic such as roadside vegetation management, paving projects to attain consistent road edge treatments
- Identify opportunities for funding for planning and capital improvement projects

## 6. Outline of Implementation Plan and Schedule

An Implementation Plan and Schedule will be developed in Task 18. It will include

- a schedule and listing of all agency, group and individual responsibilities in the implementation of the CMP
- a description of enforcement and review mechanisms, including a schedule for the continuing review of how well those responsibilities are being met
- a strategy for on-going public participation in implementation of management objectives

The Implementation Plan and Schedule will take the form of a matrix as shown below:

Action	Responsibility	Priority Level	Time Frame	Potential Funding
Action number and description	Agency, group or individual responsible for leading task and others to be involved	Based on urgency of action to affect change, institutional capacity, fiscal capacity, and other considerations	Generally within one, three, five or ten years (based on priority and length of time to complete)	Recommends source(s) of funding that may be appropriate for the action

A scenic byway corridor is not protected or managed through a right of ownership, since the corridor -- composed of the road right of way, the lands abutting it, and view sheds -- is held by multiple owners with widely divergent needs, expectations, resources and capacities. Because of the multiple management entities involved, development of a corridor management strategy for the scenic byway is a complex undertaking. At the very basic level an organization needs to be created (or selected) to monitor, coordinate, assess, and revise the recommended actions of the Corridor Management Plan. The organization should have the creation, protection and enhancement of the corridor as its sole mission or, at a minimum, as a primary objective.

In addition to the lead organization there should be a binding **management agreement** between the communities, road owners, and public land owners along the byway that commits each to the goals and objectives of the CMP and to working together to meet those goals. The tenets of this agreement will be more fully explored in the Implementation Plan to be developed in Task 18.

Public participation in the development and management of the scenic byway should be on-going. Opportunities for participation will occur regularly as projects are undertaken. Each project should have its own public process and should always be recognized as a part of the larger byway project. In addition to on-going participation revolving around specific projects, the managing organization should submit an **annual report** to each municipality and county planning agency and all other organizations which signed the management agreement. The annual report should:

- Indicate the status of all action items;
- Document and evaluate projects undertaken;
- Share information on potential projects, and;
- Highlight any relevant issues along the byway.

The process should require a response from each municipality, road owner and land owner that signed the management agreement. The response should:

- Indicate the entity's level of satisfaction with the process and projects;
- Outline planned or potential projects for which the organization is responsible;
- Document any concerns;
- Provide overview of a public process, and;
- Make any new recommendations for revising the Implementation Plan.

The managing organization would then be responsible for revising the Implementation Plan based on feedback and anticipated fiscal and institutional capacity.

## 7. Encouraging Context Sensitive Design for Scenic Roads

Creating a Scenic Road category at the State or County level is a potential strategy for emphasizing roadway design that is sensitive to the natural and historic qualities of roads like the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail. Such a scenic road category could help ensure that transportation planning, new construction, rehabilitation and maintenance recognize not only the scenic and historic character of the roadside, but also the actual or potential positive contribution to the byway's scenic quality of the roadway itself, due to its width, alignment or structures.

A scenic road category at the State or County level would work within existing functional classification categories recognized by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and county transportation departments. Specifically, a scenic road category would operate under the general guidance for Context Sensitive Solutions as established by the New Jersey Department of Transportation<sup>2</sup>, with a particular focus on the "context" of a scenic road as recognized by the following characteristics:

- Road width
- Shoulder width
- Clear zone
- Alignment (horizontal alignment)
- Signage
- Historic features (bridges, pavement, lighting, barriers, culverts and signage)

### Scenic Road Design Goals

A scenic road category would utilize the flexibility allowed by AASHTO, NJDOT and county transportation departments to maximize the scenic character of the corridor through minimal changes in segments of road deemed to be scenic or historic. The goals of a scenic road category would be:

- Minimal visual impact of road and shoulder on the landscape, through the maintenance of existing pavement and shoulder widths, or use of the minimum allowable standard for new construction;
- Continuation of historic horizontal alignment patterns that enhance the scenic driving experience (curves) or facilitate views;
- Use of special or alternate safety features and design to maintain and enhance safety without negatively compromising scenic character, such as coated or Core-ten barriers, steel-backed timber barriers, stabilized vegetated shoulders, and retention of historic community features through the use of local and natural materials such as brick, stone and timber for bridge abutments, rails and retaining walls;
- Use of design exceptions for areas of exceptional historic or scenic value where established highway standards will negatively impact the character of the scenic road and corridor;

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/CSD/>

- Advance notification/cooperation with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJ SHPO) to identify potential needed reviews under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the US Department Transportation Act;
- Preservation or rehabilitation of historic bridges;
- Tree preservation areas for all trees and vegetation outside of, but proximate to, all construction areas; and
- Restoration of disturbed landscape features after all construction activities.

Any development of a scenic road category by the state or counties should be developed in coordination with an equal commitment to the maintenance and continuation of scenic quality outside of the highway right-of-way. The onus of preserving scenic character is not the sole responsibility of the transportation agency, but should be a coordinated effort among all the key transportation, planning and policy decision-makers along the scenic corridor. Further, it must be noted that activities outside the right-of-way ultimately impact the function and safety of a highway facility. Increased population, traffic and congestion may place pressures to alter the scenic road. Additional issues for a scenic road corridor to consider include:

- Responsible land use planning
- Sign regulation (on premise and off premise signs)
- Driveways, parking lots and other access to the scenic road
- Utility lines and corridors
- Conservation and agricultural easements
- Historic districts

## Scenic Road Design Guidelines

Design guidelines may be developed for all scenic roads in the state, for a specific collection of scenic roads (for example, National Scenic Byways), or for an individual scenic road or route. Several states, including Vermont and Maryland, have established special highway guidance for scenic roads. In Maryland, a special highway design manual was established to guide the State Highway Administration (SHA) of the Maryland DOT for all highway work undertaken on the Historic National Road, designated an All-American Road under the FHWA National Scenic Byways Program.

For the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail, the following guidance should be considered:

- Standards for SPNHT Highway Signage
  - Reduction of sign clutter
  - Clarification of direction to destination points
  - Aesthetic sign treatments including the painting or coating of sign backs and sign posts
- Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) as applied to SPNHT including:
  - Maintenance of historic road widths and alignments
  - Preservation or rehabilitation of historic bridges and structures
  - Shoulder treatment
  - Aesthetic barrier treatments
  - Aesthetic lighting treatments
- Standards for Maintenance Practices



- Replacement of decorative or aesthetic road and roadside hardware identified for the SPNHT (such as barriers, signage and lighting) with like materials and hardware after loss or damage, or during routine maintenance practices
- Restoration of landscape features after construction activity

The development of any scenic road guidelines for the SPNHT should be developed in conjunction with existing policies and practices currently authorized by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission.

## References

1. The website of the Maryland Scenic Byways Program provides access to two documents pertaining to context sensitive design,  
[www.marylandroads.com/exploremd/oed/scenicByways/BywaysProgram.asp](http://www.marylandroads.com/exploremd/oed/scenicByways/BywaysProgram.asp):
  - *Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Principles for Maryland Byways*
  - *Context Sensitive Solutions for the Maryland Historic National Road Scenic Byway*
2. "Rural Roads Study - Recommended Design Standards and Policies for Rural Baltimore County Roads," published in November, 2005. Prepared by Transportation Research Group, Inc. for the Valley Planning Council.

## Appendix:

# National Scenic Byways Program Grant Funding Criteria<sup>3</sup>

“Without significant cost-sharing from other sources, National Scenic Byways Program funds may not be used for local parks, expansion of park or forest land, or trails or bicycle pedestrian facilities serving primarily local residents or existing visitor attractions.”

The following types of projects or activities are not typically eligible for National Scenic Byways Program funds:

- Streetscaping and local sidewalks.
- Routine road construction and maintenance.
- Routine landscaping, vegetation management and maintenance.
- Preserving a pool of possible properties, rather than a specific property or properties.
- Local trail projects that do not have a direct relationship to the byway.

Maximum Federal share of cost is 80%

Priorities for NSB grants:

- designated National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads, America’s Byways
- consistency with the corridor management plan for the byway
- development of a State scenic byway program

### Administrative Criteria:

- **Greatest Strategic Benefits:** FHWA is particularly focusing on projects with demonstrated benefits for the byway traveler.
- **State, Indian Tribe and Byway Priorities:** The Priority ranking of projects is a key factor in selecting projects for funding.
- **Project Benefits:** A project should benefit the byway traveler, whether it will help manage the intrinsic qualities that support the byway’s designation, shape the byway’s story, interpret the story for visitors, or improve visitor facilities along the byway.
- **Projects Meeting Critical Needs:** Critical needs include activities to build and strengthen a sustainable organization, to manage byway activities, and to implement projects or other initiatives.
- **Funding Expenditures:** States, Indian tribes and byways showing greater progress toward the completion of prior approved projects are considered better candidates for project selection.
- **Ready to Implement:** Projects that can be obligated and begin soon after authorization to proceed are given preference.
- **Leveraging of Private or Other Public Funding:** Commitment of other funding sources to complement requested byway funding to enable more projects to be funded.
- **Other Considerations:** Application selection will consider Congressional direction or guidance provided on specific projects or programs.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/application/information/>

### **Funding for Safety Improvements:**

- Improvements must be necessary to accommodate increased traffic and changes in the types of vehicles using the road as a result of the designation of the byway.
- Funds may be used for safety improvements on the byway or a road providing direct and immediate access from the byway to an interpretive site or other resource directly related to the byway or its intrinsic qualities.
- Funds may **not** be used for road maintenance or to correct preexisting deficiencies or deficiencies arising from the normal use of the road.

### **Funding for Byway Facilities, Recreation Access, or Resource Protection:**

- Funds may be used for facilities or improvements directly related to the byway and that support the byway's designation.
- The facilities or improvements should increase the quality of the byway traveler's experience by informing the byway traveler or visitor of the significance of the byway's intrinsic qualities that form the byway's story, fulfilling multi-modal recommendations of the byway's corridor management plan, or providing access for vehicles or visitors who otherwise would not be able to access the recreational area.
- To the extent practicable, byway travelers and visitors should have free access (without charge) to facilities developed or constructed with National Scenic Byways Program funds.
- A building or land purchased, restored, or improved using National Scenic Byways Program funds should be owned or operated by a government entity, Indian tribe, or a legally organized not-for-profit entity or part of a not-for-profit entity.
- Funds must be used to protect a specific proposed resource or property. A project proposing to protect a pool of possible properties is **not** eligible for byways funds.

### **Funding for Interpretation and Marketing**

- Funds may be used for the development and implementation of an interpretive plan, including tourist or interpretive information directly related to the byway and the intrinsic qualities that support the byway's designation.
- Funds may be used to develop and provide information on the State's network of byways, a specific byway's intrinsic qualities, and related byway amenities.
- Funds may be used to develop and implement marketing programs a network of byways, cooperative multi-state or regional program, a particular byway (FHWA encourages networking of marketing efforts).
- Funds may not be used for the ongoing administrative or operating expenses of a byway marketing program.