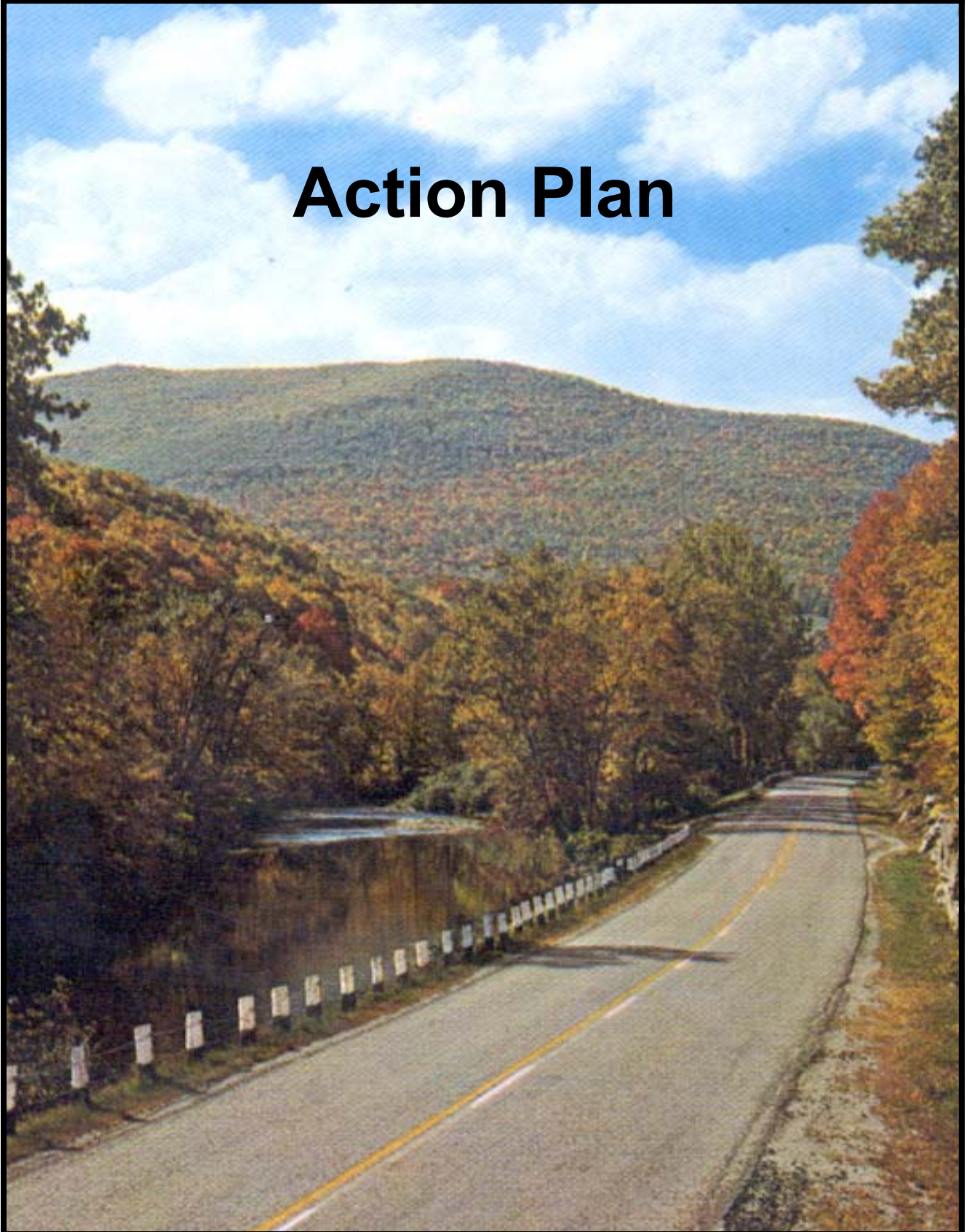


Action Plan



Prioritized Recommendations and Procedures

The Mohawk Trail East Byway (State Highway Route 2 and 2A in Athol, Orange, Erving, Wendell, Gill, Montague and Greenfield) in Massachusetts is one of the earliest and most recognized Scenic Byways in New England. It is a key east-west transportation corridor for Massachusetts. This travel corridor was originally used by the prehistoric inhabitants and explorers of the area, paralleling the natural water courses of the greater Connecticut River Valley. The travel corridor continues to be an important tourism and commercial route along the Northern Tier of Massachusetts. The corridor is rich in historic, cultural, architectural, natural, and recreational resources. The Mohawk Trail links to several other Scenic Byways in the region and also provides for the region's economic growth. Our vision is to expand economic, tourism and recreational opportunities along the Byway while educating people about the Byway and preserving its unique scenic qualities, natural resources, historic structures/places, industrial and agricultural heritage and community character.

Preserve and enhance the character of the corridor by protecting important viewsheds and natural resources.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Work with willing land owners to permanently protect high priority scenic, historic and environmentally sensitive areas along the Byway through the purchase of conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs), or the fee interest.	On-going	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (DAR), RPAs, Towns and land trusts.
Encourage the use of roadway features (guardrails, retaining walls) that are aesthetically pleasing.	On-going	RPAs, Towns and Mass Highway.
Incorporate best management mitigation techniques to treat road runoff before it is discharged into sensitive habitat areas or waterways.	On-going	RPAs and Mass Highway.
Consider strengthening local regulations to discourage signs and outside lights that detract from the scenic nature of the Byway. This may include adopting more detailed regulations and design guidelines for signs and lighting within the Byway corridor to help enhance the Scenic Byway.	Long-term	Local Planning Boards with assistance from the RPAs.
Review and consider updating local telecommunications bylaws that include siting and design guidelines to minimize the impact of cellular and telecommunications infrastructure on the Byway's scenic character.	Long-term	Local Planning Boards, with assistance from the RPAs.
Work with communities to revisit zoning bylaws, including review of allowed uses and densities, establishment of a Byway Corridor Overlay District and review of site plan approval process and criteria.	Long-term	Local Planning Boards, with assistance from the RPAs.
Consider implementing zoning measures to protect sensitive habitats, preserve natural and scenic resources and to focus new development into existing village center areas.	Long-term	Local Planning Boards, with assistance from the RPAs.

Maintain, protect, and enhance the downtowns, villages, districts and historic resources within the project area.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Complete an inventory of the historic mills along the Byway and document the industrial history of the area.	Short-term	Local Historic Commissions, Towns and RPAs.
Develop a driving tour of the Byway which highlights the historic mills and the industrial era.	Short-term	Local Historic Commissions, RPAs.
Support the efforts of towns along the Byway to create National Historic Districts.	On-going	Towns, local Historic Commissions and RPAs.
Implement a plaque/marker program along the Byway in order to recognize historically significant locations.	On-going	Town Select Board, RPAs and local Historic Commissions.
Support the implementation of preservation restrictions or conservation restrictions on historically significant structures along the Byway. Work with willing property owners to permanently protect important historic resources and landscapes.	On-going	Town Boards (Historic Commission and Select Board), RPAs and local land trusts.
Pursue funding options to assist private owners to complete restoration and rehabilitation projects for historic and architecturally significant buildings including but not limited to grant funding, tax incentives, revolving loan funds and other financial options.	On-going	Towns, RPAs, and local Historic Commissions.
Consider the adoption of local neighborhood conservation districts or local historic districts to protect historic neighborhoods and properties.	Long-term	Towns, local Historic Commissions.
Pursue options to preserve and promote historic resources along the Mohawk Trail, such as the development of architectural guidelines for historic structures to assist property owners when completing historic renovation or restoration projects.	Long-term	Town Boards (Select Board and Planning Board), local Historic Commissions and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).
Capitalize on the rich early industrial history of the area by exploring options to redevelop, revitalize and reuse former mill buildings that are now underutilized.	Long-term	Towns, RPAs and private sector businesses.

Promote a low impact approach to tourism that highlights the natural, recreational, historic and cultural resources of the Byway and that minimizes traffic congestion.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Participate in the coordinated project to develop a marketing plan for all of the Scenic Byways in Western Massachusetts.	Short-term	RPAs, Regional Tourism Councils, Mohawk Trail Association and Chambers of Commerce

Enhance and improve the services available along the Byway for the traveling public.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Identify locations and seek funding to construct additional public restroom facilities at convenient locations along the Byway.	Long-term	Towns, RPAs and Chambers of Commerce.
Improve existing turn-out areas to enhance their safety, utility and signage.	Long-term	Towns, RPAs and Mass Highway.
Establish turn-out areas at scenic vistas and locations with interpretive signage to improve safety while viewing.	Long-term	Towns, RPAs and Mass Highway.

Promote a greater awareness of the Byway and its recreational, historic, scenic and cultural resources.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Establish a system of signs to guide travelers using a unique logo that is consistent and easily recognizable and coordinated with the western section of the Byway and the other Byways in Western Massachusetts.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns, Regional Tourism Councils and Chambers of Commerce.
Develop a logo for the Byway that is coordinated with the western section of the Byway and the other Byways in Western Massachusetts.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns, Regional Tourism Councils and Chambers of Commerce.
Develop and publish a comprehensive guide and map to Mohawk Trail East Scenic Byway recreational opportunities to be available both in print and on-line.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns and local Chambers of Commerce.
In coordination with other Byway way-finding sign projects, develop a system of directional signs for recreational and other points of interest within the Byway region.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns and Chambers of Commerce.
Develop a guide to the industrial era architecture of the Byway.	Short-term	Local Historical Commissions and RPAs
Link the informational materials and web sites for the Byway with tourism web sites and webs sites for area towns, organizations and events.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns and Chambers of Commerce.
Establish a waypoint information center for the Byway.	Long-Term	Towns, RPAs, and the Chambers of Commerce.
Construct information kiosks at strategic locations along the Byway to make more information about the history of the site and the resources available to the public.	Long-term	RPAs, Towns, and local Historic Commissions.

Support, maintain, and enhance the quality of outdoor recreational experiences available to Byway users.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Develop a printed guide and map to recreational activities along the Byway.	Short-term	Towns, MA DCR, MA Dept. of Fish & Game (DFG) and RPAs.
Explore the potential of “ecotourism” along the Byway by convening a Mohawk Trail ecotourism working group.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns, Chambers of Commerce and local Conservation Commissions.
Seek to secure trail easements from willing landowners for passive recreational activities including hiking, jogging, nature observation, and cross-country skiing.	On-going	RPAs, Towns and local land trusts.
Develop a campaign to promote water related recreational activities along the Byway	Long-term	Towns and RPAs.
Develop and maintain multi-use and limited-use trails to provide access to natural, scenic, and recreational areas where appropriate.	Long-term	RPAs, DCR, Towns and local land trusts.

Increase universal accessibility to recreation areas and associated facilities.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Support efforts by state and local entities to improve access to public facilities.	On-going	MA DCR, Towns or other appropriate entity.

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

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Develop several driving tour guides with different Byway themes: Industrial Era (1800’s), Native American Route, Auto-Tourism Era (early and mid 1900s).	Short-term	RPAs and local Historic Commissions.
Educate tourism promotion organizations and tourist-related businesses about the existence of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway.	On-going	RPAs, Towns.
Develop an educational campaign that promotes the protection of the natural resources located along the Byway.	Long-term	RPAs, Towns (Conservation Commissions) and Chambers of Commerce.

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

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Ensure that all improvements to the roadway infrastructure conform with the scenic character of the Byway to the extent possible.	On-going	RPAs and Mass Highway.
Continue to support the implementation of Route 2 safety improvements.	On-going	RPAs, Mass Highway, Route 2 Task Force.
Continue to monitor crash data along the Byway and make recommendations for safety improvements where necessary.	On-going	RPAs, Mass Highway, Route 2 Safety Improvement Task Force.

Support projects to improve the safety of roadway for motorists, pedestrians, and non-motorized vehicles as appropriate given the roadway conditions.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Investigate the potential to create bike routes away from Route 2 but within the Byway study area.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns and Mass Highway.
Work to create pedestrian connections within the downtown centers that are located along the Byway.	On-going	RPAs, Mass Highway and Towns.
Continue to monitor the performance of key intersections along the Byway. Investigate the feasibility of upgrading the traffic signal equipment at the South Main Street intersection in Downtown Orange.	On-going	RPAs and Mass Highway.
Implement pedestrian safety improvements.	On-going	RPAs, Towns and Mass Highway.

Support the economic development of the Towns along the Byway.

Recommended Action	Timeframe	Suggested Leadership
Inventory and conduct feasibility studies of the historic mills along the Byway for reuse as incubators, industrial and manufacturing, and museums/galleries.	Short-term	RPAs, Towns, local Historic Commissions.
Encourage appropriate and sustainable economic development where wanted by towns.	On-going	Towns, RPAs, Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Corporations and Town Business Associations.
Explore and seek options for funding to implement downtown/main street revitalization efforts.	On-going	Towns with assistance from RPAs.
Encourage the creation of “creative cluster development” along the Byway.	Long-term	RPAs, Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Corporations and Town Business Associations.
Enhance the public visibility of agricultural and forestry businesses in the Byway towns and promote the purchase of local forest and farm products.	Long-term	Town Agricultural Commissions, Forestry Council and Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA).
