

The Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway

Volume Two: Corridor Management Plan



Section VI. Needs Assessment

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A. Introduction

This section provides an overview of the critical needs in the byway area related to improving transportation, preserving and interpreting intrinsic values, marketing the region, and managing the byway program. Reviewing the needs of the Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway road system and its users is important when planning a system that serves diverse interests with both converging and potentially conflicting needs.

B. Assessment of Functional Needs

Users of the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway include residents, commuters, commercial truck drivers, bikers, hikers, and tourists. In the rural areas, they include farmers and visitors to one of the byway's many recreational facilities. In the villages, they include many pedestrians, including schoolchildren, shoppers, and workers. The needs of each group should be balanced and integrated to ensure that each roadway is multi-functional. Conflicts that currently exist between groups, as well as conflicts that could potentially develop, should be mitigated. The assessment below, which highlights the needs that are not fully met by the current roadway system, is grouped into three categories; mobility and accessibility, amenities and services, and safety enhancements. Examples of the prototypical needs of these groups are briefly outlined in Table V-1 on the following page.

Mobility and Accessibility

Knowing where you are going and how to get there is the first step in being able and access the scenic byway. Mobility and access are important needs for all user groups. The following are needs throughout the byway:

- Directional signage. A coherent and consistent system of highway signage is needed to give the byway an identity to the traveler. Signage to amenities and services which support and enhance the byway experience (as listed on the next page) will be necessary. Signage should also direct travelers to historic districts, properties, and museums as well as parks, recreational sites, and natural areas in each town and village. In addition, existing "gateway" signage should be expanded and improved at roadway entrances to villages, hamlets, and towns.
- Proper traffic signalization. Improvements to signalization at key intersections will ensuring a positive and safe driving experience, and will protect those sharing the road with automobiles.
- Bicycle lanes and routes. Safe, well maintained, and easily identifiable bike lanes and a cohesive system of routes within the byway are needed. Such a system should promote connectivity between bicycle touring routes, community facilities, and visitor destination to reinforce bicycling as a recreational feature of the Southtowns Scenic Byway.

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Amenities and Services

Providing services to enhance the visitor experience is imperative to developing the Southtowns as a tourist destination. Some services may include:

- Visitor information. The villages are full service commercial centers that have the facilities to provide information. However, existing tourist information centers are hard to find and have limited business hours.
- Lodging. In East Aurora, visitors have the choice of staying at the historic Roycroft Inn, the new Hampton Inn, or a number of charming bed and breakfasts in the village center. Lodging in the byway area in the other municipalities is much more limited.
- Rest rooms. There are no public rest areas in the byway area.
- Tours. There are limited package tours available in the East Aurora area. No package tours are available to the other communities or to the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway area as a combined destination. There are no designated tour bus drops off or parking locations.

Safety Enhancements

Coordinating the various user groups on the roadway in a safe manner requires the institutions of safety improvements to the corridors. Some of the safety enhancements that will be necessary include:

- Shoulders. To enhance safety, particularly for bicyclists, paved roadway shoulders that are now missing or poorly maintained should be improved.
- Turnouts. Turnouts and off-road parking areas are important at locations that contain scenic views or vistas. There are presently no such facilities along the byway.
- Warning signs. Roadways crisscrossed by hikers (i.e., NYS 277 near Chestnut Ridge Park) or containing active farms (especially on Route 240 in the Town of Concord) result in conflicts between pedestrians/farm vehicles and high speed cars and trucks. Farm vehicle use is found in the byway's more rural areas, particularly in Boston, Colden, and Concord.
- Sidewalks. Village and hamlet centers host and provide services to visitors on foot. Hamlet and village areas lacking sidewalks should consider adding them to enhance visitor safety and mobility. When possible, buffer areas between the sidewalk and street should be provided to protect pedestrians., particularly along high speed and high volume segments.

VI. Needs Assessment

Figure 6 Needs Assessment by User Group							
Need	Residents	Commuters	Regional Visitors	Tourists	Truck Drivers	Pedestrians	Cyclists
ACCESSIBILITY & MOBILITY							
Directional Signage			○	○			
Traffic Signalization	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bicycle Lanes/ Routes	○						○
AMENITIES & SERVICES							
Visitor Center			○	○			
Maps And Brochures			○	○			
Lodging				○			
Restaurants	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Picnic Areas	○		○	○			○
Packaged Tours			○	○			
Enhanced Streetscape	○	○	○	○		○	○
Special Events/Programs							
SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS							
Improved Shoulders	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Turnouts And Parking Areas			○	○	○		○
Mitigate Dangerous Speeds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sidewalks	○		○	○		○	

C. Assessment of Needed Roadway Improvements

Signage

An easy-to-identify and understand system of way-finding or directional signage is needed to guide people to and within the Byways to assist visitors and enhance their experience. The Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway should provide directional signage to other regional attractions. In addition, there is a need to provide clear connections and appropriate signage between the Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway and the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. These connections would undoubtedly boost usage of the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway and, reciprocally, the larger statewide and national scenic byway networks.

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US 219

Road Conditions

Major roadway rehabilitation work was completed in summer 2006 along US 219 in the byway study area.

Turnouts, Parking Areas

There are currently no turnouts or parking areas for visitors along any part of the byway road system, including US 219. Adding such amenities would promote and enhance the byway experience along the region's main traffic artery and a prime viewing location for vistas of Lake Erie, Buffalo, and the Boston Hills.

Right-of-Way and Adjoining Lands

There is a need to improve the appearance of the immediate highway right-of-way along 219 by: mitigating the restoring areas with landscape scars and areas of continued erosion where cuts in the hillsides were made to create the highway roadway; when replacing bridges over stream crossings (which currently completely block creek views).

Development patterns along adjoining lands within view of travelers along US 219 are generally compatible with scenic byway goals. A notable exception is the section of US 219 that is not a limited access highway. This section, through Springville, contains many negative visual elements and safety issues. Enhanced and targeted land use regulation

US 20A

Road Conditions

A major reconstruction project for US 20A for most of its length in the Village of East Aurora, is in the planning stages, with construction scheduled to begin in 2009. The remainder of the roadway in the byway corridor area (in Orchard Park and the Town of Aurora) is in good or better condition.

Turnouts, Parking Areas

There is a need for a turnout/parking area at the scenic spot in the Town of Aurora where Route 20A crosses the deep Cazenovia Creek gorge.

Pedestrians

The success of the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway will bring an increase of pedestrians, tourists and window shoppers to the village centers. When designing village tours and locating information kiosks and signage, organizers should ensure that crossing locations are as safe as possible.

Biking

There is a need for bike lanes or signed bike routes throughout the byway area outside the villages. Within the villages, there is a need for "Shared Bikeway" signs in the villages (like that on Route 240 in the Village of Orchard Park). There is also a need for bike racks in the villages.

NYS Route 240

Turnouts, Parking Areas

Route 240 is one of the most scenic sections of the byway. The roadway twists and turns around the valley walls of the Cazenovia Creek and through the rural hamlets of West Falls and Colden. Pullovers should be established in these two areas. As its name suggests, West Falls is home to a cascading waterfall in the center of the community. A parking area does already exist here, yet its access and character could be greatly enhanced.

Pedestrians

A walking path alongside the Cazenovia Creek bed should be developed to provide access to its scenic, natural, archaeological, and recreational values.

Biking

"Share the roadway" signs and the improvement (widening where too narrow and where feasible of shoulders) is recommended.

NYS Route 39

Turnouts, Parking Areas

A tour bus load-unload and parking area is needed in the vicinity of the historic districts.

Pedestrians

Curb cuts and driveways should be minimized for new development or redevelopment along U.S. Route 39 in the village to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts.

Bikes

As in the other villages, bike signage and storage racks are needed.

D. Assessment of Intrinsic Value Needs

Recreational

All of the parks located in the study area need to be properly maintained on an ongoing basis. In addition, the following specific needs are identified for individual resources;

Chestnut Ridge Park:

- Document and preserve its historic features, notably the 1930's architecture.
- Restore and re-open the tobogganing chutes.
- Enhance the interpretation of the park's vast resources.
- Connect the park through pedestrian and bicycle networks to other parks
- Restore the Casino.

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Creek Access:

There is very limited public access to the beautiful creeks which traverse the byway area to allow for in the water and shoreline recreational activities such as canoeing and hiking. To this end:

- Pedestrian , cross-counry-skiing, and bike connections are needed to link recreational resources on Route 240 including Sprague Brook County Park, Kissing Bridge ski resort, and the Colden Tubing Company.
- Creek access needs to be enhanced or introduced along all navigable sections of the creeks in the byway area. Specifically, a canoe launch into the Cattaraugus Creek is an immediate need at the new Scoby Dam Park near Springville.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Systems:

- There is a need to enhance walking and biking connections throughout the byway.

Scoby Dam Park:

- *The park needs visitor amenities and interpretative resources.*

Scenic

These needs relate to the Byway system as a whole;

- Many of the most scenic views of creeks, waterfalls, and gorges are obscured by vegetation most of the year. There is a need for selective pruning at key locations.
- There are only three billboards along the byway roads. These should be phased out.
- Standardized suburban development threatens rural character. There is a need to guide the design of new development to minimize their impact on the scenic landscape.
- Uncontrolled logging is threatening the scenic quality of the wooded rolling hills that characterize the area. There is a need to protect the region's wooded lands from clear cutting of timber
- Appreciation of the scenic value of the region would be greatly enhanced by providing better access to naturally beautiful areas, such as Langdon Fill, Eighteen-Mile Creek, Cazenovia Creek, Cattaraugus Creek, and the Boston Hills.



The Chestnut Ridge Casino is in need of a new roof.



The dilapidated Springville Hotel sits at the entrance to the historic Village.