

Lessons from the Road

Case #7: Managing Growth and Development

As you organize a scenic byway effort and make a Corridor Management Plan, it is worth considering just what you are wishing for, because your wish may come true. Along with increased attention and more visitors, many destinations experience new pressures for growth and development.

The experience of other corridors makes two points. First, it is possible to manage change through a combination of incentives and restrictions suited to local conditions and political will. Second, the decision whether or not to promote growth, and what kinds, is a public question best answered in open discussion.



Is the community prepared to handle changes and pressures that accompany rising popularity? Are policies in place to guide actions of public agencies and private entrepreneurs? If not, how will you manage change? This case study will introduce a public process that can guide the quantity and quality of development.

About Lessons from the Road

This case study features lessons learned by scenic byway advocates across the country that are applicable to many scenic byway initiatives.

Scenic byways are public roads with special scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, and/or natural qualities that have been recognized as such through legislation or some other official declaration.

Nomination guidelines for National Scenic Byway designation require a series of planning and management elements. Some byway efforts lead to nomination, and possibly national designation; the rest choose other paths for implementation. These case studies show how various byway managers address planning and management issues in distinctive ways.

Each case study in this series concludes with a resource list of helpful publications and details on how to contact the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse.

Good luck with your byway.

The Series

1. Mapping
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Guidelines for Conservation & Development

The Jacob's Ladder Trail (known as the JLT) is a section of Massachusetts Route 20 between Russell and Lee. It winds through narrow valleys, passes by fast-running rivers, rock outcrops, and widely spaced farms, and travels over heavily wooded hills.

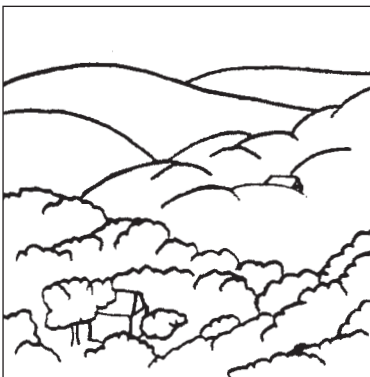
This 35-mile Byway and the five classic New England villages settled along the route are recognized for neatly kept historic houses and mills and impressive natural beauty, unspoiled by standardized commercial franchises, flashy signs, or disruptive development. The economic growth that changed other towns in the region bypassed this corridor, allowing it to retain its historic, physical, and cultural qualities.

The JLT Scenic Byway seeks to promote tourism-based economic development while maintaining the "body and soul" of the area. Two documents express that goal in broad and specific terms.

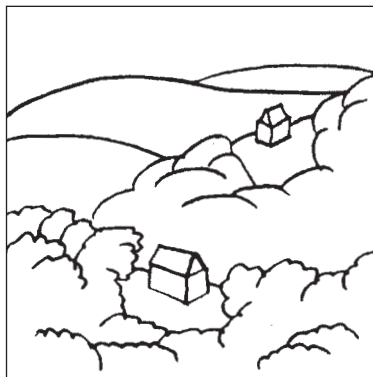
In 1994, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission produced the *Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study*. A year later, in *Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Development*, planners detailed a corridor management process using a set of land use

planning tools and design guidelines administered by a Design Review Board.

The JLT design guidelines recommend design review, describe desirable development as defined by the community, and suggest that the guidelines respond flexibly to varied settings, from woodlands to villages. Elements considered during the design review process are: site design, landscaping, architecture, signs, lighting, and parking.



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Build below ridgelines to maintain scenic views.

Guidelines Work at Two Levels

The guidelines manage growth at two levels: community-wide (land uses mixes and impacts on the landscape as a whole) and site specific (facade design and site plan-

ning).

The guidelines present key concepts graphically, such as "Build Below Ridgelines" shown above. It also presents three hypothetical developments: a residential subdivision; a commercial mall; and conversion of a residential building to commercial use (shown on page 6). Bird's-eye view sketches show improvements over standard development practices that are possible using innovative design, the guidelines, and the review process.

Design Guidelines for Your Corridor

While no single prescription works in all settings, the following steps are commonly taken and may help to organize your efforts.



Keep village centers compact to maintain each community's boundaries and

1. What You Have and What Matters Most

Review your inventory of intrinsic qualities to understand which ones residents cherish most. Intrinsic qualities include scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources.

Is it rolling fields and pastures, tree-lined roads, old stone-bridges, and the village around the green? The red rocks jutting against blue skies and the scent of piñon pine and juniper? Is it the tradition of friendliness among people who wave to one another passing on the road? The mix of young and old, farmers and craftspeople who gather at the Saturday Market? Or is it the contrast between the open plains and surrounding foothills?

2. Vision, Goals and Objectives

A vision statement communicates the byway community's "sense of place" and provides the foundation for developing goals and objectives to be implemented later by design guidelines and land-use codes.

3. Existing Land Use Control Framework

Examine current land uses and planning policies, regional growth trends, initiatives in the byway corridor, and the plans of public land managers and heritage areas or historic districts. Identify concerns and priorities, and explore ways to supplement or amend existing regulations. For example, a plan may designate areas as "rural

land" implying continued agricultural uses, but may not provide regulatory or voluntary mechanisms to preserve the land as working farms or forests, or as open space.

4. Tools

Look at other byways and communities that you admire and list the tools they use to maintain and preserve their character. Supplement the tools now in use along your scenic byway with new ones that work for other byways. (See page 5 for a list of tools.)

5. Coordinate

Undertake byway planning as a coordinated effort among communities and agencies in the corridor. Address regional influences and issues, anticipate pressures, and share solutions. Team up to support the byway, to protect a significant natural or cultural resource, or to gain political clout.

More Guidelines & Examples

6. Outreach and Education

Communicate with byway stakeholders and attract new supporters with ongoing public outreach, education, workshops, and literature.

Invite everyone to participate; offer meaningful roles; and recognize the many ways people can “own” the byway.

7. Design Guidelines

Design guidelines can help you protect the resources and character of the byway. They are practical principles that guide planning, design, and review of new development.

Write guidelines in plain, non-technical language for non-professional users. Clear, concise guidelines inform

developers and designers of the criteria applied to projects. Vague rules invite discretion by review board members that can lead to personal opinions or arbitrary and capricious decisions.

Around Lake Tahoe, Nevada, guidelines call for common design values throughout the corridor, such as low walls to screen service areas. Other measures are tailored to suit distinct visual environments: the use of concrete in urban zones, and stone or wood in rural zones, for example.

You may decide, as the City of Phoenix, Arizona did, to use a combination of standards (mandatory requirements) and “pre-

sumptions and considerations” (advisory recommendations).

8. Design Review Process

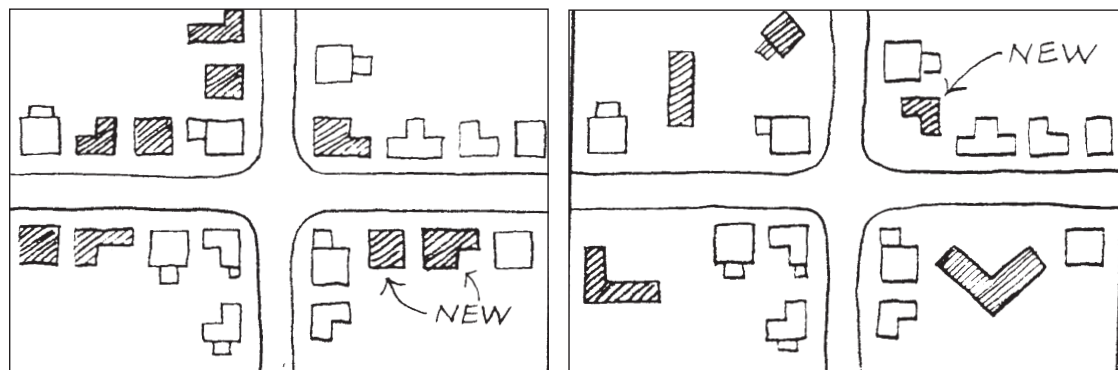
Create an open process and use public review meetings. Nominate members and solicit volunteers for a Design Review Board. Call on residents and experts, including members with professional and technical expertise. Offer pre-application meetings so agency staff can review proposals with applicants before board review and action.

9. Regular Updates

Revisit your design guidelines periodically to evaluate which elements are working and how to improve the rest.

The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation on Sanibel Island, Florida, provides professional education for real estate agents and “welcome” literature to new residents about the island’s fragile environment. It describes how conservation measures, such as land-use ordinances, prohibit building on the dunes and limit paved areas to protect groundwater recharge.

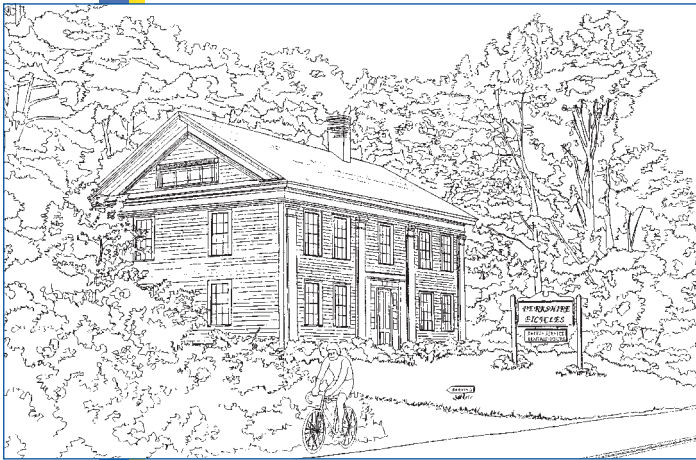
Use consistent spacing and setbacks to create an attractive and orderly village center.



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Lessons Learned



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Make the most of your resources by preserving the character of residential properties when converting them for commercial use. Guidelines can ensure that new enterprises fit within the look of your byway.



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A Growth Management Toolbox

There is a large and growing toolbox of maintenance and preservation tools. Use the following list as a starting point to learn more about measures that may work well in your area.

Voluntary Tools

- Conservation easements
- Transfer of development rights (TDR)
- Purchase of development rights
- Tax incentives
- Design guidelines
- Education about resource values
- Acquisition of critical lands
- Differential assessment
- Relaxed requirements or bonuses
- Right of first refusal
- A byway “friends” group
- Donations of supplies, property, or funds
- Flexibility and compromise

Legislated Tools

- Zoning and land use ordinances
- Technical assistance from agency planning and enforcement staff
- Enforcement

- Design standards & review
- Sign regulations
- Special districts (such as historic)
- Public services ordinances
- Byway overlay zones or districts
- Local scenic roads ordinances
- State and Federal environmental requirements (air and water quality, coastal)
- Differential tax assessments
- “Right to Farm” legislation (freedom from “nuisance” complaints)

“How to control economic development so that it does not destroy the very attraction it celebrates is the issue taken up in these design review guidelines: not to prohibit but to enhance development; to preserve, conserve and grow in an intelligent and measured manner.”

—Jacob’s Ladder Trail
Scenic Byway Development,
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
June 1995

Additional Resources

Rural by Design, Randall Arendt with Elizabeth A. Brabec, Harry L. Dodson, Christine Reid, and Robert D. Yaro. American Planning Association, Chicago, 1994.

Design Review Guidelines, City of Phoenix, Arizona.

Design Review Guidelines, Lake Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Nevada.

Design Review Manual, City of Sedona, Arizona, 1994.

Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study, in five volumes; Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 1994.

Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Development, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 1995.

Contact the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse for these and other resources (see below).

About this Series

The National Scenic Byways Program of the Federal Highway Administration and the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service collaborated to research, write, and produce **Lessons from the Road**. The series was written in 1998.

For information on resources mentioned in this series, contact the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse: 1-800-4-BYWAYS (1-800-429-9297), press 2, or visit our website at www.byways.org.

The Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program works beyond national

park boundaries to bring conservation assistance to communities, serving as a catalyst for tangible results.

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