

Lessons from the Road



Case #11: Action Plans—Putting Your Byway in Gear



Think about implementation early, even during initial field surveys.

Once the Corridor Management Plan is complete, byway advocates must shift gears from planning to implementation. This case study covers the effectiveness of action plans for ensuring that your byway becomes a reality.

A Corridor Management Plan answers the questions of what needs to be done, by whom, how, and by when. The plan is only as good as the byway community's commitment to taking action on

its component parts.

To help byways seeking national designation meet their goals, the Federal Highway Administration requires a responsibility schedule in their management plans. The schedule lists all agencies, groups, and individuals who are part of the team that will carry out the plan, and lists their specific and general responsibilities. It also describes

enforcement and review mechanisms and includes a schedule of when and how progress will be reviewed.

Though this can sound daunting, developing a responsibility schedule or action plan can be a straight-forward and highly stimulating process. It defines clear direction and accountability. Following a step-by-step process to determine roles and responsibilities can lead to a shared sense of purpose, motivating the various partners toward implementing their byway management plan.

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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Who Needs to Be Involved



Consider all potential partners in your byway project, and bring them together early in the process. Public agency staff, non-profit organizations, local government, businesses, and individuals can all help achieve your byway goals.

Begin by bringing the important players to the table. Many agencies and organizations are obvious partners for implementing a byway management plan, such as State, county, and local highway engineers, tourism bureaus, planning organizations, and local governments. It is also important to be inclusive and recognize that some “non-traditional” partners may have much to contribute and that some obvious partners may be willing to do more than anticipated.

On the Ohio & Erie Canal

The Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway covered all of its bases by forming a Scenic Byways Advisory Committee representing the 44 political subdivisions along the route as well as Federal and State agencies, visitor and convention bureaus, metropolitan planning organizations, park districts, chambers of commerce, and local historical societies.

Recognizing that the Advisory Committee was too large to complete the actual development of the Corridor Management Plan and manage its implementation, it designated a 15-member task force. Representatives on the Task Force include the county engineers from each of the four counties along the route, county planning agencies, the National Park Service, Scenic America, and three non-profit organizations that represent a broad spectrum of private interests along the Byway. Together the Advisory Committee and Task Force will implement the management plan for the Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway.

The Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway

uses its Task Force and Advisory Committee as a clearing house and to prioritize projects relating to the development of the Scenic Byway. To work toward implementation, projects are handled locally whenever possible. The Task Force coordinates regional projects and designates a project sponsor to keep it on track. The Task Force and Advisory Committee provide technical assistance as requested by the county and local agencies and organizations responsible for the planning and developing the Byway.

Identify the Actions

The next step in developing a responsibility schedule is to bring the partners together to prioritize necessary actions. Many of these actions should already be identified in other parts of the Corridor Management Plan, such as the intrinsic qualities management strategy, visitor experience, and commerce plan sections, but now is the time to determine specific actions to implement the plan. The *Riverwork Book* suggests a simple process for identifying and evaluating actions that is very adaptable to scenic byway efforts. As a first step, it suggests exploring existing public and private programs to see how they could be used to implement the Corridor

Management Plan.

Next, bring together the byway partners to brainstorm and then evaluate the items in their action plan. The six guidelines for evaluating actions recommended in the *Riverwork Book*, are:

1. Type of Action

What type or types of actions, or steps, will be needed to complete the bigger action?

2. Responsibility

Is there a potential individual or group that could take responsibility for the action?

3. Support

How much public and private support will there be for the action?

4. Effectiveness

To what extent is this action likely to be successful?

5. Timing

How quickly do you need to move on this

action; will action produce quick results?

6. Feasibility

How much would implementation cost in money and human resources?

When prioritizing actions it is important to consider a mix that brings together a wide range of interests. This will lead to the shared sense of purpose and motivation mentioned above.

Set Priorities & Responsibilities

1. Determine action steps



2. Assign responsibility



3. Evaluate public support



4. Evaluate likelihood of success



5. Determine timing



6. Evaluate costs of each action

An Example: The Process at Work

The Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway developed a signage plan to unify the variety of roads that comprise the Byway.

The Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway is a 100-mile route that closely follows the remnants of the Ohio & Erie Canal. Because of this, the Byway route is comprised of many different State, county, and local roads that could easily confuse the new visitor. In the fall of 1996, the Scenic Byway Task Force identified this issue as a high priority and decided to develop a signage plan and design for directional, approach, and identification signs, and fabricate and install these signs as soon as possible. The Task Force chose the county engineer to lead the project, assisted by the Task Force and county and local government.



Step by Step

The Task Force developed the following steps as the “how” of its implementation:

- Seek funding from the Federal Highway Administration’s Scenic Byways program and other sources, matched with funds from the four county engineers’ offices;
- Contract out signage plan, design, and fabrication;
- Develop installation and maintenance agreements with local governments.

Taking Responsibility

The Summit County engineer took the lead writing an application for federal funding that secured \$240,000. The four counties provided the required 20 percent match, entered into contracts to complete the work, and developed agreements for installation and maintenance of the signs. The Scenic Byway Task Force coordinated overall implementation of the action.

The step-by-step approach to determining the who, how and when of this action resulted in clear direction, defined roles and a timeline for completion.

Lessons Learned

✓ Develop Action Plan

Develop a responsibility schedule or an action plan to answer the follow questions: Who will take responsibility for implementation? How will the action be taken? When will it be completed?

✓ Make Assignments

When considering who should be responsible for each task in the action plan, look at all the possibilities. For example, if the action is to locate, design, and construct pull-offs, roadside parks, and scenic over-



Clearly assign each task in your action plan.

looks, the county engineer is an obvious choice. But other organizations involved in your byway effort, such as the Scenic Byway Task Force, National Park Service, county park districts, local historical societies, and garden clubs, can help implement this action.

✓ Clarify Steps and Roles

Identify the steps that lead to completion of the action plan and the role of each of the partners. This is the “how” in your Corridor Management Plan. In the example above, the Scenic Byway Task Force would work with local governments and organizations to determine which resources should be made more accessible to byway users. The county engineer would design safe, easy-to-access

pull-offs and identify and seek funding for their construction. The National Park Service, county park district, and local organizations would design interpretive media to help the visitor understand and appreciate the resource. The local garden club and county and local park districts would work together to landscape and maintain the facility.

✓ Establish a Timetable

Set deadlines to provide a guide for the action plan and a framework for evaluating progress. Specifying when each task should happen sets clear expectations, provides motivation, and helps the byway come to life bit by bit. Periodic evaluations are important to track your accomplishments and progress, and alert you when a task is falling behind schedule or has been misassigned.

✓ Build a Blueprint for Success

Carefully think through the action plan that you write. A plan that brings all the partners into the effort will ensure that the Corridor Management Plan is implemented and does not just sit on a shelf. The responsibility schedule is the blueprint that leads to successful implementation of the goals and actions in the plan, resulting in corridor management that provides for the protection of significant resources and a high quality visitor experience.

Additional Resources



Volunteers can complete a variety of projects, including mapping a viewshed.

Additional Resources

Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Management Plan, June 1996.

Riverwork Book, National Park Service: Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, Philadelphia, 1988.

Starting Up, A Handbook for New River and Watershed Organizations, River Network. Portland, Oregon, 1996.

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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