

Chapter 6

Signage for the Byway

Introduction

From gateway entry points to byway directions and interpretative panels, signs will be one of the principal methods to welcome, advise, direct and educate travelers along the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway (Byway). Signage is important not only for conveying information, but also for representing the organization of the Byway and the professionalism of its management. More practically a well organized sign system helps create a more pleasurable traveling experience.

Designing and implementing a sign system specifically for the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway and effecting changes to signs that are already in place is an extensive and complex project. Its complexity however, is matched by its importance to the success of the Byway, as was repeatedly identified and stressed by Corridor and Local Advisory Group members throughout the corridor management planning process.

This chapter reviews the types of signs appropriate for the byway sign system. It also provides guidelines for the Byway sign system as well as recommendations for coordination with existing municipal and state sign programs along the route.

Existing Signage

All signs and interpretive panels should work with, build upon and where possible conform to existing signage standards and protocols currently in use in the byway corridor. Existing corridor-wide signage includes DOT/MUTCD standard route and directional markers, and tourist oriented destination signs, historic markers, brown historic areas of interest signs, and Essex National Heritage Area site markers. There are a number of site identification signs that are recognizable in a number of locations along the Byway, as well -- The Trustees of Reservations, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)), Historic New England, and Essex County Greenbelt. A few of the local communities along the route have developed a local sign program, including Gloucester, Beverly, and Salem.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES

- The byway route is not currently identified with signage.
- Information about distance to communities or destinations is not provided along the entire route.
- The byway route makes numerous turns and follows a combination of numbered highway routes and local roads. Every turn is a potential point for a traveler to get lost or misdirected.
- Some visitor facilities and attractions have independent signage programs and systems. Some of the byway communities have local visitor information sign programs and systems, as well.
- Where the Byway follows state highways, route number are posted on signs with white backgrounds and black numerals.
- At junctions or intersections, state signs are mounted on green backgrounds with white letters. These signs may include directional arrows as well as distance to state highways or other landmarks or locales.
- Some intersections lack street/road name signs—there is a noticeable difference among municipalities.
- There is a significant amount of sign clutter along the route, the majority occurring at decision making points, or intersections, and often at municipal lines.
- There is an inconsistent application of regulatory, safety and general directional/informational signage along the byway route.

Examples of Existing Highway Directional Signs



Examples of Existing Tourist Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) or Official Business Directional Signs (OBDS)



Examples of Existing Interpretive Signage



Examples of the Inclusion of Essex National Heritage Area logo



Historical Markers

Historical markers identify the places that are significant to a particular historical event or person. They can provide a daily reminder of the past. Individually, the local details can seem insignificant beyond their local relevance: the home of an individual who made a difference; a natural feature, building, byway; or something interesting that happened nearby. However, collectively they can contribute to the byway traveler's exploration of the region and should be part of a coordinated program to tell the byway story.

Historical markers explain key concepts with limited detail and explanation, however there are different types of historical markers. Some simply state facts while others provide a story or highlight the connection to a significant event or historical period. Most are located along a travel way – roadway or bike path.⁴⁶ Most historical marker programs began in the early twentieth century and are often administered by local or state historical societies.

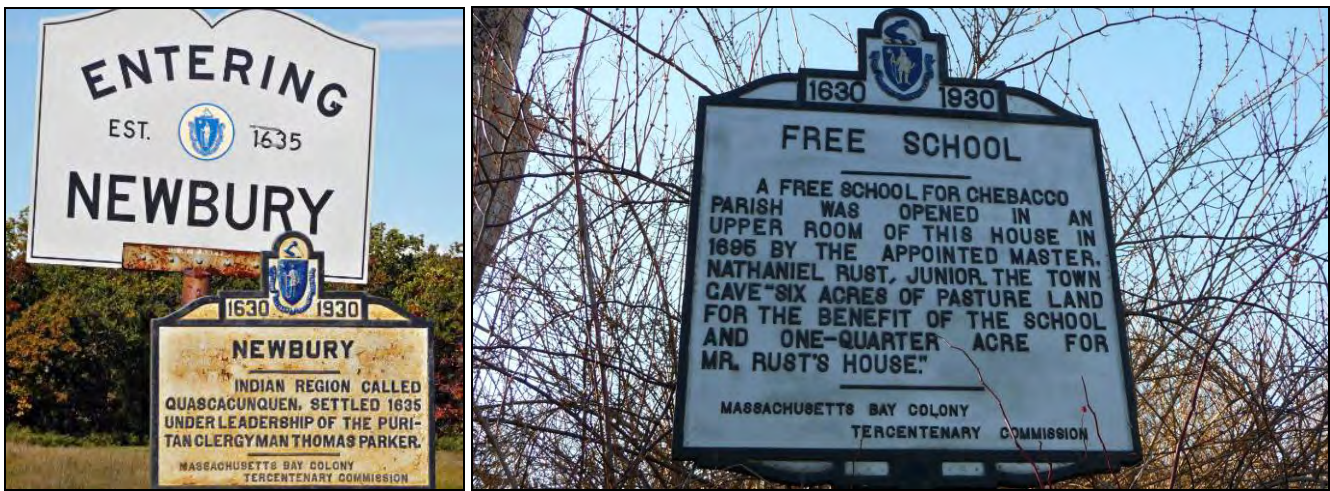
Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Markers

In 1930, in honor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary, Massachusetts established a program to install signs and markers along state highways “with suitable inscriptions thereon, indicating the ancient ways of the Puritan times and the structures or places relating to or associated with the early settlements within the commonwealth.”⁴⁷ The resolve assigned responsibility for installation and maintenance to the Department of Public Works (now MassDOT) from appropriations made for maintenance of the state highway system. The 1930s markers are of cast iron. The tablet measures thirty-six inches in width and thirty-five to forty-five inches high. Originally, the tablets had letters and trim in black on a painted white background and the coat of arms in blue and gold (colors have faded over time). The inscription is the same on both sides.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ More about Historical Markers can be found at “The Historical Marker Database” <http://www.hmdb.org/> and “The Historical Markers Society of America” <http://www.historicmarkers.com/>.

⁴⁷ Resolve of 1930, Chapter 10, approved March 26, 1930.

⁴⁸ The original markers were constructed by Carlisle Foundry Company, Carlisle, PA.



Tercentenary signs in Newbury and Essex

Table 4: Tercentenary Historical Marker Locations along the Byway

<u>Community</u>	<u>Sign Title</u>	<u>Location</u>
ESSEX	Free School	West side of Rt. 133 (John Wise Avenue) north of Western Avenue
	John Wise House	East side of Rt. 133 (John Wise Avenue) at John Wise Lane
	Shipyards of 1668	North side of Rt. 133 (Main Street) at Essex Shipbuilding Museum
GLOUCESTER	Settlement of Cape Ann	East side of Hough Avenue in Stage Fort Park
	Samuel de Champlain	East Main Street at Rocky Neck Avenue in East Gloucester
IPSWICH	Agawam-Ipswich	East side of Rt. 1A/133 (County Road) at Ward Street
	Revolution of 1689	East side of Meetinghouse Green at Green St. north of Rt. 1A/133
LYNN	Lynn	South side of Rt. 1A/129 at Nahant Street on Washington Sq.
NEWBURY	Landing Place of First Settlers	East Side of Route 1A at Cottage Road across from Lower Green
	Newbury	East Side of Route 1A at Rowley Town Line
NEWBURYPORT	Watt's Cellar	North side of Merrimac St. west of State St. at Market Sq.
	Approach to Carr's Ferry	Southeast corner of Jefferson St. at High St.
	Dalton House	East side of State Street north of between Prospect St. and Garden St.
	Edward Rawson	South side of High St. between Lafayette St. and Rawson St.
ROCKPORT	Old First Parish Burying Ground	West side of Beach Street near Main Street
	Bearskin Neck	North side of Dock Square at the entrance to Bearskin Neck
	First Settler	West side of Main Street between Beach Street and Broadway
	John Poole	King Street at Smith Street
	Benjamin Tarr House	East side Rt. 127A (South Street) near Dean Street
ROWLEY	Rowley Burial Ground	East side of Rt. 1A at Rowley Burial Ground

Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising -- part of the built environment that is visible within the travel corridor -- has the potential to highly impact the character of the roadway and the traveler's experience of the intrinsic qualities along it. For these reasons, as well as to promote safety, outdoor advertising is controlled at federal, state and local levels throughout the country.

In 1958 federal legislation (known as Title 23 of the United States Code) declared that the erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising signs, displays, and devices in areas adjacent to the Interstate System and the primary system should be controlled in order to protect the public investment in such highways, to promote the safety and recreational value of public travel, and to preserve natural beauty.⁴⁹ Title 23 specifically intends to provide protections for designated scenic

⁴⁹ The term "Interstate System" means the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways described in section 103 (c) of United States Code Title 23. The term "Federal-aid highway" means a highway eligible for assistance under this chapter other than a highway classified as a local road or rural minor collector.

byways by prohibiting outdoor advertising along any highway on the Interstate System or Federal-aid primary system that has been designated a scenic byway. Subsequent federal acts have clarified and modified elements of the code.⁵⁰

Prohibited forms of outdoor advertising include sign structures or combinations of sign structures or messages visible from the designated route that advertise a business, service or event located in another location (off site). On premise commercial signs, official traffic control or directional signs, and signs installed under the recommended Tourist Oriented Destinations (TODs) program are exempt from the prohibition.⁵¹ While these restrictions apply to rural areas, commercial and industrial areas remain vulnerable as the law permits outdoor advertising in urban, commercial and industrial areas provided size, lighting and spacing, is consistent with customary use.

The following roads of the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway are subject to Title 23:

Table 5: Byway roads subject to Title 23.

Route	City/Town	Federal-Aid Primary/Secondary
1A	Ipswich	Primary
133	Essex to Rte 128 in Gloucester	Primary
1A	Veterans Bridge, Salem/Beverly	Primary
1A	Bridge Street, Salem	Primary
114/1A	Lafayette St. Salem	Primary
1A	Lynn Shore Drive	Primary
1A	Lynnway ⁵²	Primary

State regulations controlling outdoor advertising are found within Massachusetts General Law: Chapter 93: Sections 29 – 33 and are under control of the State Outdoor Advertising Board. The state requires all outdoor advertising to be permitted annually and otherwise Massachusetts regulations generally mimic federal language, thus offering no additional protection.

Cities and towns may further regulate and restrict billboards, signs or other devices within their jurisdiction by ordinance or by-law. Each of the thirteen byway communities has local regulations regulating outdoor advertising. However, the content of the regulations vary greatly, resulting in the allowance of a wide diversity of signs along the Byway in terms of design, size, and number of signs allowed per site. So while a particular sign may be compliant with local regulations, it may be widely inconsistent with other signs along the Byway.

Signs along a roadway are a prominent aspect of the built environment and the variety of signs can add visual interest and can also provide cues to the type or character of the community. Signs that are unattractive, too large, poorly maintained, or inappropriately placed (too clustered to be read or blocking views) however, can be a visual intrusion, and in some cases can be a safety concern. Every effort should be taken to ensure that the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway benefits from the diversity of signs alerting users to sites and services and is protected from scenic infringements and safety hazards of inappropriate signs and placements.

⁵⁰ The Highway Beautification Act of 1965, Federal Highway Acts of the 1970s, Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978 and Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

⁵¹ Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TOD) and Agricultural Signs provide the business identification and directional information for businesses (including seasonal agricultural products), services, and activities the major portion of whose income or visitors are derived during the normal business season from motorists not residing in the immediate area of the business or activity. They are intended for use only on rural conventional roads and shall not be used at interchanges on expressways or freeways. From "TOURIST ORIENTED DIRECTIONAL SIGNS and GENERAL INFORMATION & APPLICATION of MDOT, updated 12/23/2009.

⁵² The north bound side of the Lynnway/Carroll Parkway from Broad Street to Nahant Circle is now owned by MassDOT Highway Division.

Recommendations for Byway Signage

BYWAY SIGN SYSTEM PLAN

A consistent, integrated, informative, and attractive sign system should be a primary goal for the Byway. Goals of an effective sign system are to:

- Assist travelers in locating the Byway.
- Provide multi-modal guidance to travelers on the byway route.
- Provide information on visitor locations and byway resources.
- Maintain visual consistency for all byway signage.
- Help keep travelers safe.

A consistent and integrated sign system provides the traveler with strong visual cues along the byway route and within the byway corridor. The sign system should include:

- Recognizable logos
- Recognizable colors
- Consistent fonts (letter styles)
- Uniform installation practices including construction and locations

An important component of the byway sign system will be the use of byway iconography (signs, shields, logos) to “brand” the Byway. Branding will help create a sense of a comprehensive and unified route that is regularly, if subtly, reinforced by the presence of consistent and high quality signs.

It is important that the signage plan for the Byway work closely with existing Essex National Heritage Area and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards to introduce and define the key concepts, sites and attractions for which the byway route has been designated. The Essex National Heritage Area has created a Sign Standard Manual. This manual provides great detail and graphic imagery and should be used to develop a byway sign system. The manual provides well-developed details and offers sign type flexibility to suit varied site conditions. The manual provides recommendations for Directional Signage, Site Identification Signage and Informational/Site Interpretive Signage.

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL SIGN PROGRAMS

The byway sign system must comply with guidance in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*⁵³ and the MassDOT Guide Sign Policy for Secondary State Highways, and be coordinated with state and local authorities to ensure the greatest level of consistency along the byway route for all types of signs and information. Byway signs posted within the public right-of-way along the byway route should meet all applicable standards for sign posting and safety (such as reflectivity, size and breakaway posts).

Byway sign planners should work to ensure that existing state and local signs for route markings (US, state route shields) and directional and distance signs are clear and consistent in information and completeness. Byway sign planning should also address sign issues that may interfere with the aesthetic quality of the Byway (unnecessary signage, sign clutter, repetitive or obsolete signs).

BYWAY SIGN CLASSIFICATIONS

The byway sign program should include guidelines for a hierarchy of sign classifications, both those that are directly related to the Byway as well as other state and local roadway signs.

Gateways

When a scenic byway route is linear and does not intersect with other major routes, its two endpoints provide logical locations for gateway signs. However, the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway is more complex, running through thirteen communities on local roads and along seven major state routes with looping section extensions. As a result, instead of two

⁵³ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2000

clearly defined starting points, there are multiple access points to the Byway for travelers. Nevertheless, there are some logical principal points of entry based on prevailing travel patterns. These are identified as primary gateways and discussed further in Chapter 4.

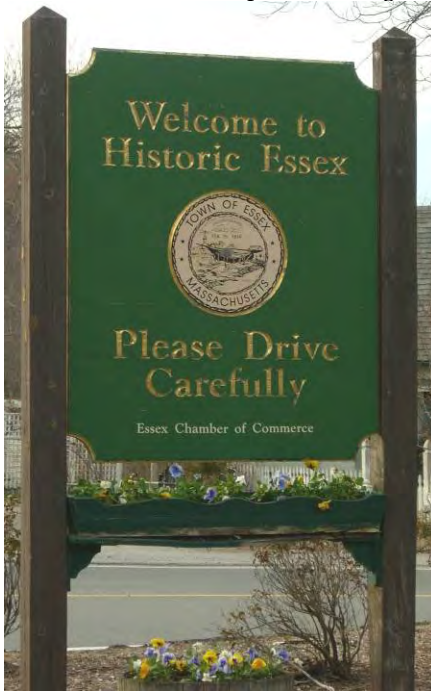
- 1) Lynn at Nahant Circle, southern start of Lynn Shore Drive, primary access from Lynnway (Route 1A) to Carroll Parkway
- 2) Newburyport at Atkinson Common primary access from Rt. 95 (Exit 57) to Storey Ave/Ferry Rd intersection
- 3) Gloucester at Rt. 128 Grant Circle (Exit 11 onto Rt. 127)

Signage at key gateway points can provide a clear sense of arrival to the Byway. The gateway signs should be the principal introductory visual cue carrying the byway logo/symbol. Gateway signage should be uniform throughout the Byway, and build upon visual cues established in the Essex National Heritage Area Sign Standards manual. Gateway signage should be coupled with visitor amenities and support services in close proximity to the Byway, and should represent a point of access through which the traveler may engage with the byway story.

The gateway sign should identify the route by name (and without abbreviations), include a note of arrival such as “welcome” or “entering,” introduce the logo or symbol image that the traveler will be following as a part of the wayfinding system, and include logos or acknowledgements for Byway sponsors or partners. A goal of the gateway sign should be to reduce sign clutter along the byway route by recognizing all byway partners at a few key entry points, therefore allowing the simple byway wayfinding logo/symbol to represent the Byway (and all its partners) as the principal route marking.

- The location should be prominent to the byway route.
- The location should be in an area with minimal visual clutter (signs, commercial property, utility lines, etc).
- The location should be expressive of the natural, scenic, cultural, recreational or historic resources of the route—the gateway sign against a background of woodlands, water or a historic structure (a gateway sign should never compromise or detract from a natural or historic site).
- It is more important to have the gateway sign at a location that is attractive and representative of the byway corridor, than at the exact boundary of the defined route or district. The gateway sign should be as close to the boundary as possible. If an exact boundary marking is required, a small sign acknowledging the “begin” or “start” point may be erected.
- Gateway signs should be carefully located and coordinated with municipality “Welcome to...” signage. Welcome signage is not typically considered byway gateway signage thus the two should be coordinated and standardized in terms of message and information relevant to the traveler’s experience.

Examples of existing municipal “Welcome to...” signage along the Byway



The gateway sign for the Town of Essex creates a strong arrival statement, sense of place and quality. The classic design of the sign reinforces the features of the area and establishes a certain visitor expectation. The sign gives basic information—the name of the town and the town logo/symbol.



The gateway sign for Gloucester is nautical in design, and still fits well in the natural setting of the scenic road.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs are generally logos or symbols that mark the route and provide information in three key situations: access points, turns and movements, confirmation. Through the design and installation of a single logo or symbol to mark the byway route, byway travelers are provided with a uniform and reliable route marking that operates in conjunction with, but independently from, other identifiers such as route numbers and road names. Wayfinding is particularly important for the Byway because it takes many turns and follows multiple U.S. and state route numbers.

The byway logo/symbol should be posted at all turns and at regular intervals along the route to enable travelers to remain on the Byway. Every byway turn or intersection with significant cross routes should have three wayfinding (byway logo) signs:

- An advance notice of movement (left ahead, right ahead, forward);
- Notice of movement at the intersection (left, right, straight);
- After the turn or intersection, a confirmation (byway logo) sign identifying the Byway.

Byway Access Points

Simple byway access signs should be located at locations where non-byway routes and other modes of transit intersect the Byway.

Once general access locations are identified, they should be prioritized by access type and anticipated visitor volume. Direct access points lead directly to the byway route without further route changes required; indirect access points would require the traveler to make additional route changes before reaching the Byway. As a second step it is important to identify the exact location where the access sign should be placed in each access area.

Non-vehicular access points need to help orient the traveler arriving to the Byway without a motor vehicle. In some cases these travelers will go on to experience the Byway by foot or bicycle. They may elect to travel through a segment, or loop back to a station or transit hub. Water-based gateways are more difficult to identify and sign for, and only public and structured access points should be identified -- boat ramps, wharves and piers should be prioritized over beaches and riverbank launches. These secondary gateways should be identified by simple signs that include the byway logo/symbol and note the feature or secondary gateway.

Passenger rail stations provide opportunities to provide information about the Byway and lead visitors to it. Signage and roadway improvements should be used together to create safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle paths from stations to the Byway or byway resources. Strategies to consider include:

- Providing interpretive information about the Byway at the station;
- Installing directional signs from the station to the Byway;
- Improving safety and accessibility from the station to the Byway with a pedestrian and bike path, bike lane, or wider shoulders.

Confirmation Signs

Confirmation logos or symbols should be placed after all turning movements directed by the byway wayfinding system and periodically along the byway route to reassure byway travelers that they are still traveling the byway route. Due to the many turns that are a part of the byway route and the multiple crossroads and intersections not associated with the byway route, regular confirmation signs will be an important consideration. Confirmation signs should be placed within one-quarter mile after the turning movement, and generally every eight to ten miles for lengthy byway segments from which no turning is required.

Bicycle Route Signs

The idea of creating a companion bikeway for the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway is discussed in Chapter 4. If the bikeway is established through legislation, the route would be identified with a standard bicycle route sign with the byway logo. If the legislative route is not pursued, unique signs for the bikeway should be combined with byway signs for simplicity and to reduce sign clutter.

Identifiers and Directionals

The Essex Coastal Scenic Byway is a non-linear route with loops and parallel routes in some areas, and as a result offers the traveler multiple options to continue on the Byway. At some intersections the byway route may continue straight as well as making a turn to the left or right. Approaching an intersection with signs showing the byway route both continuing straight *and* turning left (for example) can potentially be confusing for the traveler. This is especially problematic for travelers who are using the signs as their principal form for guidance and direction, since not all travelers will have a byway map. At these intersections it is critical that wayfinding signs be paired with clear destination signs indicating the direction to communities and points of interest.



Examples of advance turn sign (left) and “turn here” sign (right) on scenic byways

A list of principal destinations for directional signs should be established. These should include gateway communities, other town centers with visitor services, key transportation junctions, and attractions that have high visitation. (This should not, however, be a list of all destinations along the route.) Destination signs should be posted in advance of all intersections where a choice/option in the byway routing is presented. At such decision points, the additional destination information will assist byway travelers in making an informed choice. In general no more than three destinations should be listed on any one sign.

Tourist Oriented Destination Signs (TODS)

Tourist Oriented Destination Signs, or TODS, provide basic traveler information. TODS are signs that are located in areas with high levels of tourism and visitation to provide traveler information that is reliable and consistent. TODS are utilized as an alternate to off-premise signs (billboards). TODS may be used to provide direction to private establishments (bed and breakfasts and antique shops) or public facilities (boat launches, public beaches, hiking trails, for example). TODS are uniform in size and may include a logo.

The Massachusetts Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign Program and Agricultural Directional Sign Program (ADS), administered by MassDOT, Highway Division Sign Unit outline the criteria for eligible facilities, sign number, location and design requirements, application and approval procedures, and fees.

While there are many visitor facilities along and proximate to the Byway, there are other services (museums, bicycle or kayak rentals and farm markets, for example) that the general traveler may be unaware of, or that may be nearer than perceived. TODS and ADS would provide a visually responsible and user friendly program to advise byway travelers of basic services geared toward the leisure/travel market.



Examples of TODS signs used by the Maine Department of Transportation. (Maine DOT)

TODS for the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway should serve two distinct purposes:

1. Provide direction for essential visitor services located off the designated route, such as lodging, fuel and food.
2. Provide direction for visitor facilities, areas of interest, and public lands located off the designated route. Services and facilities such as farm markets, museums and historic sites, boat launches and hiking trails, fishing and boating access, and distinctive shopping (antique shops, craft markets, Massachusetts-made products) could be included in a TODS system.

Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signs and panels provide information to residents and visitors through written text and graphic images including photographs, illustrations, maps and charts/graphs/sketches. Interpretive signs and panels can provide both general Byway information (an introduction to the features of the byway corridor) and site specific information (detailed information at a natural feature or historic site). Interpretive signs and panels are reliable 24-7 facilities that can provide the traveler with basic information.

Interpretive signs and panels should be distinctive, visible, accessible, and of high quality design with uniformity of appearance and in expected locations (at every wayside pull-out, for example)). Interpretive signs, as the principal visitor education signage effort, should appear at all key sites along the byway route. For significant byway sites that have existing sign systems in place, an introductory interpretive panel, based on the design of the byway interpretive panels, should be considered as an introduction to the site—transitioning travelers to the local or site interpretive sign system. An introductory interpretive panel enhances byway branding and informs the traveler that the facility is clearly a part of the byway experience by this visual association or cue. Again, interpretive panels for the Byway need not replace existing interpretive signs and panels currently in place or planned for resources, communities and attractions along the byway route. More information on interpretation is provided in Chapter 7.

Historical Markers

Byway communities with existing state-sponsored historical markers should work with the state to maintain the markers and the marker sites and preserve these as important historic objects. If additional local markers are desired, communities should consider how these will relate to existing markers and ensure a coordinated level of quality and information.

Regulatory, Warning, and Guide Signage

Regulatory, warning, and guide signs will occur in addition to byway signage, so their presence creates a cumulative signage impact on the overall byway traveler experience which should not be underestimated. While their purpose may be more practical and safety-oriented, they represent one of the most frequent types of signs along the entire byway route. Every curve and intersection (and points between) along the byway route are noted, regulated and informed by highway signs.

A general goal for the Byway should be improved aesthetic sensibility to and uniformity of the installation and maintenance of standard highway signs, and reduction of redundant and excessive signage along the byway route.

All signs posted along the public right-of-way, including byway wayfinding and gateway signs (not interpretive panels), are subject to the policies outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration. Relevant sections of the MUTCD are included in the Appendix.



The City of Williamsburg, Virginia, to minimize sign clutter, clusters route shields (guide signs) on a single panel. On lower-volume roads the city uses smaller shields than on higher-traveled/higher-speed roads. Additionally, the backs of all signs in the city are painted to match the sign posts – minimizing the visual impact of signs when viewed from the opposite direction. Compare the Williamsburg route signs (left and center) to unpainted backs and individual shields (right) in New York. (Photos: Rick Taintor, Dan Marriott)



Guide signs associated with the Boston Parkway system, are administered by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The signs are distinguished by clean graphic design, a wide white border at the base and a simple logo at the lower right corner that identifies the parkway management.

BRANDING

Branding the Byway is an important part of visitor information, direction and orientation, and for establishing the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway as a comprehensive visitor destination consisting of many complex, interesting and unique destinations and features. From beaches, marsh, wetlands and woodlands, to museums and historic communities, to the roads (byway route) that link all these resources together, a comprehensive and consistent brand logo/symbol should be present.

The Byway should have a distinctive brand that crosses municipal lines; park, forest and public lands; and sites of historical significance. The traveling public is generally uninterested in, and unaware of jurisdictional boundaries and ownership when focused on eco-tourism or heritage tourism. They view an area/region as a complete destination—not a collection of individual pieces. Therefore, a single byway brand will reinforce this concept and visitor reality. It will also better benefit all attractions and destinations as travelers look for the logo/symbol as a symbol of further areas to explore and new experience to engage.

The byway logo/symbol will be the principal indicator identifying the byway route for the traveler. The logo/symbol should be distinctive in form and color and easily recognized. It should also be simple in graphic design. It should be recognizable from a distance, due to its color and shape (not text or imagery). The Essex National Heritage Area logo in combination

with the National Scenic Byways logo could be incorporated into a logo/symbol for the byway route. An alternative solution would be a unique icon developed specifically for the Byway.

Use of the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway Logo/Symbol

If the Essex National Heritage Area logo/symbol were integrated into a brand identification program for the Byway, it would offer the following benefits:

- Already recognized through use on gateway and some interpretive signs
- Heightens and validates the national significance of the Essex National Heritage Area
- Easy to read due to simple clear graphic design
- May be readily modified for special uses



Use of National Scenic Byways Logo

In addition to the logo and signage standards set forth in the Essex National Heritage Area Sign Standards Manual, the FHWA has developed logos for use on national scenic byways to “*help promote consistency, recognition and pride for the collection of distinct and diverse roads nationwide.*” The logo is to be displayed in DOT approved formats and cannot be modified.

The “America’s Byways” logo can only be used for byways that have been designated as a National Scenic Byway. The NSBP logo may be used for byways that have received funding from the National Scenic Byways program, but have not received national designation. The Essex Coastal Scenic Byway may use this logo.



OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

There are a number of actions communities can take to preserve or enhance the visual integrity of the Byway by addressing outdoor advertising. As a first step each community should review its sign regulations to determine their effectiveness in serving businesses and organizations eligible to place signs, and in preserving the community’s visual character. Some regulations may be improved by adding or strengthening design standards or requiring a review process. As an alternative to changing existing ordinances and bylaws, communities could consider a byway sign overlay district for the byway route only; overlay district regulations could help bring a greater level of consistency to outdoor advertising along the Byway. Each community should also monitor the Byway within its boundaries and identify and require replacement or removal of any sign not in compliance with local regulations and standards.

In addition to regulations, other steps should be taken to improve sign design and maintenance along the Byway. Communities can begin by setting design and maintenance policies for municipal signs and then by taking actions. For example, each community should ensure that community entry/welcome signs are attractive, well placed and well maintained. Byway appeal and community character could be further enhanced by each community taking actions to improve and maintain signs for downtowns, village centers, identifiable neighborhoods, historic districts, and schools and other community owned facilities.

A roadway improvement campaign that requests voluntary compliance with design guidelines intended to enhance a community’s appearance could be one strategy for involving local businesses. Outreach, education, an open and community centered process, and incentives should be components of an effective campaign.

Areas of Note

A number of areas along the Byway have been noted as potential sites for improvement of outdoor advertising.

On Broad Street in Lynn a large billboard affixed to a low brick building is out of scale and character with the surrounding environment. Also an Adopt a Site sign on an improved median site is so brightly colored and logo dominated that it has a negative influence on the small space.

The visual appeal of Bridge Street in Salem is negatively impacted by the number, placement and design of commercial signs. A program that assists businesses with sign design and placement could be considered to bring a consistent and appealing image to this redeveloping area.

A large billboard on the side of a building is intrusive as visitors enter Beverly from the south.

One instance where voluntary improvements could occur is in Essex. The abundance of signs and flags advertising antique shops and dealers throughout Essex provides a cluttered but lively and intriguing visual experience to the traveler. Businesses could capitalize on the opportunity presented by this market dominance and develop a system of signs to heighten the effectiveness of marketing and reinforce the community's identity through a strong visual reference.

The roadside in Ipswich north of the village center has abundant free standing signs that generally detract from the visual quality of the roadway.

A large, poorly maintained, free standing sign south of the Parker River Bridge in Rowley presents a blank wall to the byway traveler. It should be improved, if compliant with regulation or removed if noncompliant. Rowley's sign bylaw allows only one free standing sign per commercial property (two if a property fronts on two streets) and allows a maximum size of eighty square feet.