

Chapter 9: Action Plan and Funding Resources

Introduction

The Action Plan charts a course for preserving the resources of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway in the next ten years, as it folds together all of the recommendations coming from the seven major resource chapters within this second Corridor Management Plan. It also includes the 14 strategies recommended within the Land Use and Community Planning Chapter. The Action Plan, developed through discussions with members of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. —community appointed representatives for the Byway and a representative from MassHighway—have been further refined through discussions with boards in each of the Byway communities, and members of the public who have provided comments.

Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. (JLTSB, Inc.) members regard the Action Plan as an important guide, but by no means static, as there must be flexibility to respond to important opportunities as they arise. Above all, members of JLTSB, Inc. stress the importance that all Byway work be in keeping with the rural charm of the region and scale of existing features. They want to be careful not to market the area so successfully that they destroy all the best qualities of the Byway. To date, members have been content with the nature of their successes. One member has noted, "We have met our goals quietly, building important nodes of activity such as the Boulder Park Trail and the Newman Marsh Trail. All of our work has been done so that residents of the five Byway towns are satisfied that we are subtle and not changing the nature of the region."

The Action Plan is organized around six major goals defined by members of JLTSB, Inc.:

- promote economic development;
- promote historic preservation;
- promote tourism;
- enhance the Byway's intrinsic resources;
- promote improvements of highway facilities; and
- guide future development.

Under each of these goals, there are "priority actions," which are seen as essential to promoting the integrity of the Byway and its local communities, and urgent in terms of their implementation time frame. "Recommended actions" are also essential, but there is not the same sense of urgency.

Sources of funding to pursue the work described here in the Action Plan are enumerated in the next section of this chapter. The most important of these resources is the National Scenic

Byway Program, a program managed by the Federal Highway Administration, which provides grant monies that can be used specifically for planning and implementing byway projects. More detail is provided in the funding resources section.

Action Plan

Goal #1: Promote economic development

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
Work with the Jacob's Ladder Business Association, the Lee Chamber of Commerce, and other local groups, to create linkages and find ways to support their efforts.	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Make project links to other Western Massachusetts scenic byways to strengthen and enhance Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Work with cultural institutions on and adjacent to the Byway that are of great importance to drawing visitors to the region. These include: Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Becket Arts Center, the Chester Theatre Company, Vincent Dowling Theatre Company, Chester Railroad Museum, the Chester Jail and Museum collections, Becket Athenaeum and other institutions that exist or will develop to enrich the opportunities for cultural experiences along the Byway. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Work to find ways to nurture, support, and promote artists, craftspeople and cottage industries in the Byway area. This may include development of promotional materials and events that bring recognition and business to this group that is critical to the cultural base of Byway communities. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
Encourage local agricultural commissions to help in preserving agricultural land uses and promote agricultural tourism in the Byway corridor. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Encourage Byway municipalities to investigate and implement tools and incentives to promote downtown/village center economic development. Some of the tools being used in communities around Massachusetts to promote economic development of all shapes and sizes include: business improvement districts; community development action grants; community development block grants; community development funds; district improvement financing; tax increment financing; and economic development incentive program. Regional planning agencies and local community development	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies and local community development corporations

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
corporations can assist in identifying programs and grants that would provide the most benefit to village centers along the Byway. <i>(Land Use and Community Planning chapter)</i>	
Promote diversions and secondary activities such as dining, shopping, recreational equipment rentals and lodging through the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website and an activities guide. Also, provide opportunities for local businesses to promote themselves, through the Byway website and other marketing initiatives. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
As visitorship grows, promote lodging along the Byway beyond Lee and encourage additional facilities, especially bed and breakfasts, which retain the rural character of the area, support local residents, and can adapt to seasonal variations. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Foster a spirit of cooperative enterprise among Byway business owners by conducting ongoing educational and marketing seminars on signage, landscaping, window displays, hours of operation, customer service (as it pertains to knowledge of the town and Byway), other businesses along the Byway and how to collaborate in cross-promoting of businesses, and directing travelers to nearby amenities. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., the Jacob's Ladder Business Association, the Lee Chamber of Commerce, and other local groups
Promote attractions throughout the Byway at the Lee Visitors Center and Prime Outlets and display information about attractions and events in Becket and Lee at information centers in Chester, Huntington, and Russell. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Goal #2: Promote historic preservation

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Use the occasion of the Centennial Celebration to pursue several activities that bring recognition to the Byway's cultural and historic resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designation of Route 20 as a National Scenic Byway (an application for which has been submitted). If the nomination is not successful, additional resources should be sought to bring the nomination to fruition. ▪ Commemoration of the centennial through a reenactment event of the historic opening of the Byway in 1910. ▪ Permanent installation, perhaps a work of art or an addition to the stone cairn at the Summit. <p><i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i></p>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
Continue cultural resource inventories with the inventory of the Housatonic/Upper Main Street neighborhood, and Housatonic Street in Lee as a high priority. An inventory for properties on Laurel Street, Stockbridge Road, and Railroad Street in Lee has just been completed. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and local historical commissions
Once the work to rehabilitate the Maple Street Bridge in Chester is completed, work with the Town of Chester to plan for a celebration and on-going floral decoration of the bridge as a travel destination. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with Town of Chester
Recognize and support significant historic properties through funding mechanisms such as a revolving loan fund and the Community Preservation Act (CPA). JLTSB, Inc. should establish a revolving loan fund through public and private means that would enable the organization to support historic preservation through low-interest loans for National Register listed properties that follow the U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards for rehabilitation and restoration. It is further recommended that when Byway communities adopt the CPA, that JLTSB, Inc. support preservation activities along the corridor. It is also recommended that when the opportunity exists, the Byway make application for CPA funding to accomplish preservation projects in the Byway corridor. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and local historical commissions
Actively support the local historical commissions in the Byway towns. Advocate with the commissions to become "Certified Local Governments," which would make them more competitive with larger cities and towns for state survey, planning, and Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grants. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies
Help to document and raise awareness of the history of the Byway area. This could include developing a project for the collection of oral histories of residents of the Byway communities to deepen the historical record and engage residents. In this and other historical projects, interviews and other activities might be undertaken by students in local elementary and high schools. Further integrating Byway history with local history curriculum is recommended. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and local historical commissions

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
Continue to advocate within communities for the preservation of threatened historic resources. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. town representatives with help from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and local historical commissions
Apply for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's Heritage Landscape Inventory Program when it	JLTSB, Inc. town representatives with help from

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>becomes available in the Byway region. Registering the resources and developing protective strategies should be one of the Byway's principal activities. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	<p>Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and local historical commissions and/or conservation commissions</p>
<p>Make nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for significant cultural and heritage landscapes in the Byway corridor in cooperation with local historical commissions. Among the potential historic districts are East Lee, the Horace Moses Boy Scout Camp in Russell, and Crescent Mills in Russell. National Register listing will help protect the resources from certain federal and state projects. For longer lasting protections, it will be necessary to work with local planning boards and historical commissions to implement preservation strategies through zoning bylaws. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. town representatives with help from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and local historical commissions and planning boards</p>
<p>Erect historic district signs in the communities that would welcome them. The bronze National Register markers that are readily recognizable by the public are recommended. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	<p>Pioneer Valley Planning Commission with MassHighway after input from local planning and select boards</p>
<p>Develop projects for the restoration and preservation of Byway landmarks, both public and private. Five buildings that contribute significantly to the visitor experience on the Byway that also present major preservation challenges are: the former Chester Methodist Church, the Eagle Mills in Lee, Strathmore Mills in Russell, Stanton Hall in Huntington, and the Lee Congregational Church. As structural problems in the latter two are perilous, these buildings should receive attention as soon as possible. The Strathmore Mills in Russell and the Eagle Mill in Lee are particularly important heritage landscapes. Additional buildings that contribute to the Byway experience and that deserve support for historic preservation include: The Bookless Block in Lee, the Heath and former Dupell's Buildings in Huntington, and the Gothic Revival house associated with the pink granite quarry in Becket. Landmarks include bridges, such as the Cross Bridge in Huntington, memorial objects such as Jacob's Well in Becket, and parks, and archaeological sites. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. town representatives with help from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and input from local historical commissions and planning boards</p>
<p>Activate public programs to educate communities on the principles of historic preservation and local history. Through history presentations, articles, tours, posters and more, it is recommended that the Byway committee continue to make known the historic features of the Byway and the principles behind their preservation. This should include supporting the efforts of the Lee Chamber of Commerce and Lee Historical Commission and Historical Society in expanding their walking tour of Lee. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	<p>Pioneer Valley Planning Commission with local historical commissions and JLTSB, Inc. town representatives</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
Support the efforts of the Lee Historical Society in their efforts to establish a museum and particularly in celebrating the town's mill heritage, which is such a source of pride in the community.	JLTSB, Inc. town representatives with regional planning agencies

Goal #3: Promote tourism

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
Participate in developing the Western Massachusetts scenic byway website to highlight important recreational and cultural resources and tourism support services within the Byway corridor. Also, provide potential connections to other scenic byways, and link to other websites with information about attractions in the region. This should include improving the effectiveness of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website, by adding downloadable tourist documents and maps. (<i>Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
<p>Work with the state agencies to develop a <i>marketing strategy</i> to draw visitors to the wealth of outdoor recreation facilities located in the Byway region, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), MassWildlife, and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) to work cooperatively to market the affordability of the Commonwealth's outdoor recreational resources as a vacation option. • Consider promoting and marketing recreation along the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway in tandem with recreation along the Route 112 Scenic Byway to capitalize on the wealth of open space resources in the entire region. This could also entail the creation of other competitive outdoor recreation events, like the Westfield Wildwater Races to draw visitors to the region. • Work cooperatively with the Lee Chamber of Commerce to expand their list of great hikes, adding new hikes throughout the Byway region. The same should be considered for great waterfalls in the region. • Reprint updated bicycling route materials, using the maps developed in the 1990s as a foundation. This effort should be coordinated with local biking interests, the DCR, and the New England Mountain Bike Association. • Revise and reprint the 1994 publication <i>Touring Jacob's Ladder Trail by Bicycle or Car</i>. • Develop an outdoor recreational guide for each season to draw visitors to the Byway region year-round. This guide should be in print and easily downloadable format from the internet. 	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract a recreational outfitter to the Byway region, who could rent and sell equipment and supplies for boating, cycling, camping, etc. This will help facilitate positive outdoor experiences for residents and visitors alike. • Develop a bird-watching guide to help direct residents and visitors to areas known to support specific species. <p><i>(Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter, Transportation Resources Chapter)</i></p>	
<p>Highlight Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival as the Byway’s foremost attraction, with the wording “home of the world-renowned Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival” in all marketing materials, in the opening paragraph of all brochures, and on the website. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i></p>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
<p>Clarify and simplify distinctions between the Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, the Jacob’s Ladder Business Association, the Hidden Hills of Western Massachusetts, and the Pioneer Valley (the latter used by Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors’ Bureau to include the Jacob’s Ladder area). <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i></p>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Build on the relationship with the region’s visitor bureaus and take full advantage of the opportunities to promote the Byway through JLTSB, Inc. membership in these organizations (provided there is funding available). The tourism agencies may provide a way to implement an e-marketing program. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i></p>	JLTSB, Inc.
<p>Continue to publicize historic destinations and heritage landscape destinations through books, guidelines, walking tours, events, re-enactments, celebrations, and exhibits. Some of the possible activities and products are to: develop farm tours for local foods and architectural history; support farmstands for local produce, maple syrup, honey, and other products; support events and recognition for local artists and craftspeople; update Byway towns’ walking tour publications. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i></p>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
<p>Inform any consultants working on Byway projects of the primary lures and “Seven Hidden Gems” as the Interpretive Signage and Wayfinding Project and the Marketing Implementation Project move forward. Be careful not to dilute the Byway’s “brand” of being in “the Berkshire foothills” while also promoting its links to the other byways. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i></p>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
<p>Design and install information gazebos along the Byway (Recommendation #14 from the 2004 <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>). While this project will fit well into a National Scenic Byways grant application, this should wait until significant progress has been</p>	JLTSB, Inc. local representatives with help from the regional planning agencies and MassHighway after input

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
made on the wayfinding and interpretive signage programs so that recommendations, designs, and improvements in those projects can be incorporated and integrated with the gazebos. In fact, it would be useful to have the wayfinding plan identify potential locations for the gazebos, preferred construction designs, and visitor information signs to alert travelers to the gazebos. (<i>Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter</i>)	from local planning and select boards
On trail maps highlight turnouts that provide access to the Housatonic and Westfield rivers for canoeing and kayaking. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies
Cross-promote the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway with the Route 112 Scenic Byway, along which is located one of the "Seven Hidden Gems," the Huntington Country Store. (<i>Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies
Develop themed travel itineraries and brochures. The most prominent themes for the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway are: outdoor recreation, heritage (including railroad history), railroad theme (by itself), arts and culture, and shopping (ranging from outlet mall to New England country stores and antique, crafts, and gift shops). Work with area businesses and non-profit organizations to develop cooperative travel packages. Make package information and brochures available on the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website. (<i>Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc., and the regional planning agencies, working with Chester Foundation, Hilltown Artisans Guild, Jacob's Ladder Business Association, Lee Chamber of Commerce,
In conjunction with the new, more visible signage, prepare a series of informational articles, or encourage local journalists or other writers to do so, describing and illustrating the themes of the heritage landscape, railroad history, arts and culture, outdoor recreation, and New England shopping along the Byway. Establish cooperative marketing relationships for development and publication of these articles, <i>i.e.</i> , with major cultural attractions, visitors' bureaus, and park management agencies. Distribute these articles to regional and national travel writers as resources for newspaper and magazine articles about the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway. This is related to the suggestion in the <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy</i> to reach out to niche groups and to cultivate press relations. (<i>Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies
When incorporating Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway into other maps, be sure not to overlook the hand-drawn, "bird's-eye view" maps that depict the Berkshires area and Lee, put out by Resort Maps Franchise, Inc. (see ResortMaps.com), free to the public and found in nearly every store or attraction. (<i>Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Work with tourist-oriented local businesses to encourage them to provide public restrooms. The regional planning agencies could also work with towns, businesses and business associations to develop	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
optimum plans for restrooms, parking, seating, and trash facilities. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	
Certain marketing products and visitor guides would make excellent new products if updated and redesigned. These include the Bicycle and Car Touring Guidebook, the Off-Road Bicycle and Multi-Use Trail Maps, and the educational video, which could be converted to DVD and divided into “spots” to be used for various purposes. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies
Improve awareness, information, access and perceptions about sites along the Byway that are currently underused. For example, the Keystone Arch Bridges are a fantastic resource, but they are hard to access for the average traveler. The Chester Theater is a wonderful venue, but the shows have short runs, and are not widely known. The Huntington Village Green is a beautiful site and could be enhanced for sitting, music playing, picnicking, and relaxing. Chester Village is also a very inviting environment but needs more benches and green spaces (planters, street trees) to encourage people to stop. Although a number of improvements have been made, the Chester Railroad Depot and Museum lacks visibility. <i>(Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. with help from the regional planning agencies

Goal #4: Enhance the Byway’s intrinsic resources

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
Promote continuity of identity and community buy-in through consistent and attractive interpretive, identification and wayfinding signage. This should entail collaborating with the Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee to place their signs at all river crossings on the National Wild & Scenic River.	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies working with MassHighway
Work to limit sign clutter by identifying unnecessary or redundant signs for removal, and combining signage on posts.	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies working with MassHighway
Continue to improve roadside attractiveness along the Byway through pruning and planting, and, where appropriate, thoughtful selective clearing. Also, improve existing views that have become overgrown by continuing selective pruning along rock outcrops and riverbanks. Conversely, improve existing areas of lesser scenic value by planting programs and encouragement of private owners to beautify these areas. Consult with Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee where pruning or other management activities are planned for areas adjacent to the Westfield River. <i>(Landscape Inventory and Assessment chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies working with MassHighway
Inventory land ownership and investigate land protection	JLTSB, Inc. and regional

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
mechanisms, such as acquisition or conservation restriction, to protect Uncommon and Exemplary Natural Communities as defined by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. This includes: the Black Ash/Red Maple/Tamarack calcareous seepage swamp that exists on the Lee-Lenox border; the High Energy Riverbank Community in Chester; the High Energy Riverbank, Cobble Bar Forests, and Riverside Outcrop communities that lie within Huntington; and the High Energy Riverbank Community within Russell, and the Ridgetop Chestnut Oak Forest/Woodland, and Ridgetop Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak communities that lie on the Russell-Montgomery border. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)	planning agencies working with local conservation commissions, and land trusts
Develop a current data base of protected lands for the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway corridor to provide a good baseline for understanding future losses and additions. It would be useful to understand how protected lands relate to the occurrence of the most critical resources in the Byway corridor, and whether agents for land protection are able to focus on these areas. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies working with state agencies, Byway towns, and local land trusts
Coordinate agencies and organizations in the region that are managing recreational areas and access points to address recreational concerns and issues and to develop consistent public messages on rules and regulations, proper etiquette, respect for historic features, such as stone walls, and such concepts as "carry in/carry out" or "leave no trace behind." Consistent public messages should lead to a decrease in depreciative visitor behaviors, particularly littering and irresponsible and destructive all-terrain vehicle use. This should, in turn, lead to better public support of future recreation and conservation efforts. Most important in this work is to address trash and litter problems and help landowners manage the problem by defining options for trash collection. Trash collection also ought to be a consideration in the establishment of any new recreation areas as well. (<i>Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies working with state agencies and other organizations working in the region

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
Identify viewsheds for protection through zoning, conservation restrictions, and acquisition. Work with towns to find the most acceptable means of protecting these important landscapes, with owners when zoning is not an option, and finally through acquisition. (<i>Landscape Inventory and Assessment chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with town boards and help from regional planning agencies
Develop a booklet on the history of the Byway, drawing from the wealth of research done during the development of the mobile exhibit. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. with help from regional planning agencies
Identify an improved landscape inventory methodology and in five years conduct a new scenic inventory of the Byway, so that in ten	Regional planning agencies with guidance from JLTSB, Inc.

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
years a Corridor Management Plan III may be produced with an evaluation that reduces some of the subjectivity. (<i>Landscape Inventory and Assessment chapter</i>)	
Develop a marketing campaign to communicate the importance of the Byway's natural resources. Why are these worth protecting? What are the tools communities should use to protect these resources? (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local conservation commissions
Produce an "action map" for protecting natural resources in the Byway corridor. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local conservation commissions, and land trusts
<p>Document key habitat areas and corridors by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) to investigate potential vernal pools and apply for certification where eligible. ▪ Identifying additional rare species where habitat seems favorable. If rare species found, contact NHESP and determine protection strategy to ensure continuation of the population. In Becket, these field surveys should focus on Palmer, Hamilton and Walker brooks as stated in the open space and recreation plan. ▪ Conducting field work in the forests along the Byway corridor with permission of landowners to determine if Primary Forests exist in suspected areas. If so, document biodiversity within the forests and, if appropriate, work to protect these areas through land acquisition or conservation easements. ▪ Promoting work of people in the region who are mapping animal habitat and travel corridors so that there is a better understanding of how municipalities might avoid fragmentation of these resources. The Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee, for example, is conducting riparian and species surveys to better document and characterize the riparian corridor and to develop a conservation plan. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>) 	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local conservation commissions
Protect known cold water streams from negative impacts associated with development and roadway/parking lot runoff by following maximum protection recommendations from MassWildlife, specifically strict enforcement of the 200-foot riverfront area. Protections can also include maintaining or increasing vegetated buffers between roadways and waterways, and improving the stormwater drainage system along the Byway, and careful consideration of potential to restore habitat and fish passage through dam removal and improvements at road crossings. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with the Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee, and Trout Unlimited
Protect habitat and migration corridors for the safe movement of rare species between known sites within Byway towns. In Becket, this should include habitat downstream of Shaw Pond. (<i>Natural Resources</i>	JLTSB, Inc., and regional planning agencies working with NHESP, state biologists,

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<i>chapter)</i>	land trusts, environmental advocates, other land protection entities, and where appropriate MassHighway
Develop working relationships with local and regional land trusts, including the Hilltown Land Trust, the Winding River Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and the Lee and Becket land trusts. Working relationships with land trusts could be established by establishing regular meetings, sharing Byway goals, and collaborating on the use of Byway funds for purchase and protection of key parcels. <i>(Land Use and Community Planning Chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., and the regional planning agencies, working with local land trusts
Consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to provide an invaluable revenue stream to fund protection of open space and preservation of historic resources (in addition to development of affordable housing). It will be important to develop a strategy that includes describing the success stories in other communities where CPA has been adopted. <i>(Natural Resources Chapter and Land Use and Community Planning Chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local conservation commissions, and planning boards
<p>Work with local and state entities to provide the funding and manpower needed to properly manage and more fully develop the wealth of outdoor recreational facilities along the Byway. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and expand partnerships, such as the work provided to the state by hiking, off-road vehicles, and snowmobiling clubs. • Encourage the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to maintain, or possibly improve, the outdoor recreational facilities to accommodate a possible increase in visitors that would accompany an outdoor recreational marketing campaign. • Encourage DCR to consider expanding the interpretive nature program in the Western Massachusetts Region. • Encourage Byway communities and state agencies to expand universal access facilities on locally owned public properties along the Byway. • Work with the Town of Lee to further a river greenway along the Housatonic River, linking the playing fields on West Park Street to those on Housatonic Street. • Improve recreational access to the Lee Land Trust property located on the Byway. Parking and new trails at the site could also serve as access to the adjacent Trustees of Reservations property and Appalachian Trail lands. • Create a trail system within Becket State Forest. • Create a protected recreational corridor that leads southward from the Becket State Forest to the Becket Historic Forest and Quarry. 	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with stakeholders, such as Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Army Corps of Engineers, Springfield Water Department, and local land trusts

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to explore measures and tools used in other areas (such as Cape Cod National Seashore, White Mountain National Forest, and National Parks) to overcome trash issues at turnout locations. (<i>Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter</i>) 	
<p>Enhance recreational infrastructure for trails in the region by encouraging town trail committees to link conservation lands and by exploring road categories in the region to determine if these present an opportunity to expand trail infrastructure. (<i>Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with town trail committees</p>
<p>Replace and repair signage on the Newman Marsh Trail, including the nature trail signs and the interpretive sign on the second summit. (<i>Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Help communities to better understand the interrelationship of local, state, and federal laws governing river protection and to identify gaps in protection of the Westfield and Housatonic rivers in particular. This could occur through a series of workshops for Byway towns, involving members of planning boards, conservation commissions, and code enforcement officers, chief elected officials, highway departments, and boards of health. Follow-up to these workshops might include bylaw recommendations that offer clarification and better protections. (<i>Natural Resources Chapter and Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee, and Westfield River Watershed Association with support from JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Acquire land or an easement of right-of-way for a parking lot at The Summit in Becket. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with regional planning agencies</p>

Goal #5: Promote improvements of highway facilities

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Work with MassHighway to ensure that the <i>Massachusetts Project Development and Design Guidebook</i> (2006) includes provisions that will safeguard the historic and rural scenic character of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway and other scenic byways during any improvement projects. This work should be informed by design guidelines used for exemplary scenic roads in the nation. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with help from regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Work with MassHighway to maintain the Byway's natural landscape and layout, including Byway width, Byway structures, and Byway route/pathway, as essential components of its historic character. Conversely, work with MassHighway to make improvements to the Byway that restore and enhance its natural and historic character. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with help from regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Work with MassHighway to develop a practice whereby JLTSB, Inc.</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with help from</p>

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>receives sufficient pre-design notice anytime a project is being considered that may affect the Byway. Talk with Executive Office of Transportation about establishing an automatic process whereby any preliminary project work of any kind, including signs, includes a checkbox indicating whether the project is planned for a scenic byway. This would trigger notification of scenic byway advisory groups. This might also be accomplished through a Memorandum of Understanding between JLTSB, Inc. and MassHighway. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Proposed bridge improvements along the Byway should utilize bridge railings that are consistent with the character of the Byway such as appropriate wood bridge railings, and stone masonry railings. Currently these projects include bridge C 11035 in Chester, which is currently structurally deficient, and the two bridges in Becket B 03008 and B 03010, which are currently functionally obsolete. The bridges in Becket are now in design. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with help from regional planning agencies</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Work with MassHighway to enhance cycling along the Byway, using common-sense strategies that don't compromise the aesthetic qualities of the road. This should include consistent pavement on shoulders (no crushed stone and no rumble strips) that allow for safe cycling without destroying the scenic qualities of the road, regular street sweeping of shoulders, and bicycle racks in town centers and at popular attractions. (<i>Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter, Transportation Resources Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc., working with regional planning agencies and MassHighway</p>
<p>Work with MassHighway to evaluate extent of salt contamination into surface and ground water resources. Also work with MassHighway to reduce road salt contamination, by increasing public recognition of the water supply protection areas. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc., working with regional planning agencies, local conservation commissions, and MassHighway</p>
<p>Actively pursue upgrades in stormwater management strategies for any road improvement projects proposed along the Byway. Also define an overall river protection strategy where Route 20 parallels or crosses the Westfield River or its tributaries. This work can begin with drainage studies that identify locations for best management practices that will reduce nonpoint source pollution and runoff to the river. (<i>Natural Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc., local communities and MassHighway, with help from regional planning agencies, Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee and Westfield River Watershed Association</p>
<p>Seek funds to create official turn-outs and car-top boat access points along the Housatonic and Westfield rivers. Lands for public access might be purchased using such sources of funding as the Public Access Board at Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. This will help to address the problems with so many unofficial access points where trash and erosion have become serious problems.</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with help from regional planning agencies</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<i>(Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter)</i>	
Continue to improve access to the Housatonic River in Lee, and the Westfield River in Chester, Huntington, and Russell. <i>(Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with MassWildlife, Trout Unlimited, Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee, and Westfield River Watershed Association
Work with MassHighway and others to promote snow plowing of turnouts and all official recreation parking spots for winter recreational access to public lands. This ought to include turnout areas for Chester-Blandford State Forest facilities in particular. <i>(Outdoor Recreation Resources Chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., working with regional planning agencies and MassHighway
Continue to help maintain and monitor turnouts, making improvements to signage, landscaping, parking areas, use, and structures as necessary to convey history and natural beauty of Byway to travelers. Also, explore feasibility of an “adopt a turnout program,” working perhaps with Boy Scouts and other such organizations. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., working with regional planning agencies and MassHighway
Create additional parking near cultural, commercial, and recreational resources where parking will benefit Byway travelers. <i>(Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., working with regional planning agencies and MassHighway
Support Byway town requests to MassHighway, including Russell’s current request for the installation of “Intersection Ahead” warning signs at both approaches of Route 20 in the vicinity of its intersection with Mtn. View Terrace in Russell. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i>	Towns with support from JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies
Encourage use of the existing drop off lane in front of the church in the Town of Russell located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Route 20 with Main Street and West Main Street. This driveway is used as a right turn lane for vehicles approaching and going west on Route 20. It is recommended that pavement markings in this area be redesigned to help guide traffic through this intersection. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i>	MassHighway with support from JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies
Single vehicle crashes along the Byway corridor can be reduced by incorporating enhanced reflective pavement markings, and consistent shoulder widths. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., working with regional planning agencies and MassHighway
Work to improve the safety of Route 20 in Lee since the accident rate in Lee is considerably higher than the other municipalities. As part of this effort, BRPC staff plan to include a Corridor Safety Study in an upcoming UPWP. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i>	JLTSB, Inc., working with Berkshire Regional Planning Council and MassHighway
Reinstall catch basin grates that have been incorrectly installed. Grates should have openings perpendicular to the direction of vehicular travel to reduce hazards for bicyclists. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i>	MassHighway with support from JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies
Consider the installation of more aesthetically pleasing guard rails,	JLTSB, Inc. and select boards in

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>such as Cor-ten steel, wooden rails or cable, as a part of future guard rail improvement and maintenance projects. Advisory committee members expressed interest in the removal of guardrails, where possible, to maximize visibility of scenic areas. Committee members will identify locations and make recommendations to boards of selectmen, which must in turn make a request to MassHighway, District 1, to conduct a safety analysis of existing areas protected by guardrails to determine feasibility of removal. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>each town</p>
<p>Work to ensure that the stone walls and retaining walls contribute to the scenic and historic character of the Byway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine the structural stability of several retaining walls with vegetation growing through them. This could impact the structural integrity of the walls. ▪ Consider replacing existing concrete retaining walls that are not aesthetically pleasing, with dry or mortared stone walls along the Byway. ▪ Examine stone walls that run along the old trolley line in Russell and Huntington to identify appropriate improvements and a long-term maintenance plan. <p>(<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>MassHighway with support from JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Work with MassHighway and local utilities to discuss the feasibility of enhancing roadway lighting along the Byway in a way that maintains the scenic aspects of the corridor (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB Inc. and local communities with help from regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Improve the functionality of turnouts along the Byway by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging local communities to work with MassHighway District 1 to consider making official several turnouts that are currently informal, but that offer scenic views and recreation options. ▪ Installing curbing and aprons at turnouts to better define entrances and preserve pavement. ▪ Highlighting all Byway turnouts with appropriate guide signs on the trail. This could provide the information about their location and the possibility of vehicles entering and exiting the roadway. ▪ Ensure that utilities, signs, etc. at each turnout are consistent with one another and compatible with the scenic and historic characteristics of the Byway. <p>(<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>MassHighway with support from JLTSB, Inc., local communities, and the regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Continue to work with MassHighway to replace all damaged guide signs along the Byway and periodically update the signs to provide information on all recreational opportunities and amenities offered. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Assess the need for a scenic byway plaque at Laurel Lake. (<i>Transportation Resources chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Work with MassHighway to address routine maintenance issues that affect bicyclists as well as other users. Drainage swales adjacent to the roadway have not been maintained and as a result the roadway structural base is saturated with moisture and debris is washed onto the roadway. There is inconsistent street sweeping for the removal of salt and sand in the spring. Some segments of the roadway are never swept and the sand creates a hazard for bicyclists.</p> <p><i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i></p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies</p>
<p>Install "Share the Road" signs to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists. The MassHighway design manual provides guidelines for posting "Share the Road" signs and PVPC has been successful in securing funds to install these signs. A "Share the Road" sign and additional pavement markings should be installed in the vicinity of "Andrews Corners" in Becket. Recent improvements made in this area have created confusion for bicyclists on how to move through this area. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i></p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with MassHighway</p>
<p>Work with MassHighway to ensure that driveway aprons are paved (at that portion within the state highway layout) as part of future roadway maintenance projects to minimize washout. Heavy rains, driveway snow plowing, and disturbance caused by entering vehicles result in an excessive build up of gravel and sand on the roadway shoulder. As a result bicyclists are forced further into the travel lane to avoid the hazard. As part of the Byway resurfacing project between Chester and Huntington, all driveway aprons will be paved. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i></p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with MassHighway</p>
<p>Overgrown vegetation in the shoulders should be trimmed at regular intervals. On curved sections of the roadway cyclists are obscured from the view of overtaking vehicles and have less time to react to obstacles in the road. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i></p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies working with MassHighway</p>
<p>Currently, the shoulder used by road bicyclists is not consistently continued into climbing lanes. It is recommended that MassHighway study the existing use of pavement markings in these areas to determine the feasibility of maintaining a minimum, two-foot shoulder for bicycle travel. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i></p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with MassHighway</p>
<p>Take every effort to prevent deterioration of pavement and maintain quality of pavement to ensure safety for bicyclists in particular. Distress to the asphalt is severe enough that some sections of the roadway are not passable and bicyclists are forced to ride in the opposing travel lane against traffic. This problem should be addressed for now by the proposed Route 20 resurfacing project in Chester and Huntington. <i>(Transportation Resources chapter)</i></p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and regional planning agencies, working with MassHighway</p>

Goal #6: Guide future development

Priority Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Develop a toolbox of planning materials aimed at community boards that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes a case for recommended bylaws and other guidelines that will help safeguard Byway resources. ▪ Provides case-by-case suggestions of standards that might be adopted or used as models. ▪ Provides 'sales tools' that town officials can use to build support for Byway-friendly bylaws. 	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies
<p>Promote the concept of "greenbelts," areas of land around a village center in which new residential, commercial, and industrial development is limited. Greenbelts help preserve the distinction between a village and its surrounding rural areas, preventing unsightly sprawl development. Instead, new commercial and residential development can be concentrated within existing village centers, and greenbelt areas can protect and enhance the rural scenic qualities of the Byway. While often difficult to implement, greenbelt plans can help provide an organizing structure that guides town open space acquisitions and inspires individual home owners to preserve the land they own in critical greenbelt areas. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies with local town boards and land trusts

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>Revitalize efforts to use the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway <i>Design Review Guidelines</i> for new developments, alterations and additions to existing properties. Work through local planning boards and directly with property owners. (<i>Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local planning boards
<p>Develop literature that illustrates development that has followed the guidelines and has maintained the scenic value of the Byway. Make the information available on the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website. (<i>Landscape Inventory and Assessment chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies
<p>Promote adoption of an Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Bylaw, also referred to as creative, flexible development, or cluster development. Open space development helps preserve rural character and visual appearance by encouraging new subdivisions be built with smaller lot sizes and dimensional standards than what is required in the underlying zoning. By reducing these dimensional standards, development can be more compact, and the remaining land can then be permanently protected as open space. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local planning boards
<p>In Lee, continue to monitor and participate in the cleanup efforts and</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and Berkshire

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>in the proceedings being held regarding the poly chlorinated biphenyls cleanup of the Housatonic River. The type of cleanup that is conducted on the stretch of river between Pittsfield and Woods Pond may set precedent for the type of cleanup that will eventually occur on the river south of Woods Pond and through Lee. (<i>Natural Resources Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>Regional Planning Commission, working with local town boards</p>
<p>Promote adoption of a Mixed Use Village Center Bylaw to ensure pedestrian-friendly “Main Street” shopping districts with attractive facades, parking on the street or behind buildings, tree-lined streets, and human-scale buildings with offices or apartments above first floor shops. The Mixed Use Village Center Bylaw promotes downtown development that is consistent with traditional village centers, combining residential, retail, office, and public institutional uses in compact villages or clusters to provide opportunities for people to live close to work and services. It accomplishes this through a combination of design standards and identification of desirable downtown businesses that will meet the needs of tourists and residents. This bylaw can be used in conjunction with site plan approval and commercial performance standards. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local planning boards</p>
<p>Work with communities to amend land use regulations tables so that they better reflect desirable and undesirable development types. A more specific table of use regulations makes it easier for applicants to determine what uses are allowed and what reviews are needed. When a table of use regulations is not specific, listing only a few major types of land uses, it may cause confusion. As Byway communities work to identify desirable land uses in Byway zones, it is important that these uses are added to the land use tables. Likewise, it is critical that the required review for each use is up to date and accurate, especially if site plan review or special permitting becomes a new instrument in a town’s zoning toolbox. Uses that are already addressed in the table of use regulations should be reexamined periodically to determine if their permitting status should be altered. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local planning boards</p>
<p>Encourage communities to incorporate performance standards into zoning bylaws to minimize adverse impacts on surrounding properties and the community. Commercial performance standards are essentially “good neighbor” regulations. For example, standards for access and traffic controls are designed to reduce traffic and safety impacts by minimizing curb cuts, encouraging shared access, requiring all driveways to have safe sight distances for exiting motorists, and providing sidewalks and safe internal circulation plans. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local planning boards</p>
<p>Work with communities to adapt and adopt a site plan approval bylaw in order to promote well-designed development that is</p>	<p>JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Leadership
<p>consistent with and enhances the historic character and scenic beauty of the Byway. Such a bylaw would establish specific site plan design review criteria for Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway developments based in part on the Jacob's Ladder Trail <i>Design Guidelines</i>. According to the site plan review process, the assigned municipal board (typically the planning board) evaluates development proposals using these established criteria and can request changes to modify a project before granting approval. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	with local planning boards
<p>Promote the adoption of a Mill Redevelopment Overlay District to encourage adaptive re-use of existing mill buildings. Mill revitalization districts rely on existing infrastructure, and fit into historic development patterns and neighborhoods, and do not stimulate sprawl on undeveloped land. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with local planning boards
<p>Promote adoption of a Ridgeline and Hillside Protection Bylaw to protect the scenic qualities of the Byway and prevent incompatible development, especially on the steep slopes visible from the Byway. A Ridgeline and Hillside Protection Bylaw establishes a Hillside Protection Overlay District that typically minimizes removal of native vegetation, especially large timber, and regulates the excavation and alteration of land in order to minimize erosion, flooding, and pollution of the ground or surface water supply (public or private) within the district and adjacent low lying areas. The result is the preservation of significant mountain and upland areas, and enhanced economic values of properties in the district. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with town boards and local land trusts
<p>Promote adoption of maximum driveway slope standards to control development on steep slopes that would result in public safety hazards, as well as environmental and visual impacts. Of optimal benefit are driveway standards that limit driveway surfaces within 20 feet of the edge of a roadway to 5% slopes, unless greater slopes are approved by the Highway Superintendent and the Fire Chief. If the proposed driveway grade is greater than 10%, scaled layout drawings must be submitted as well. Several towns in Western Massachusetts have adopted these regulations, including Cummington and Williamsburg. (<i>Land Use and Community Planning Chapter</i>)</p>	JLTSB, Inc. and the regional planning agencies, working with town boards and local land trusts

Funding Resources

To move forward on the Action Plan, there are several resources and sources of funding to keep in mind. The organizations and programs described in this section were selected due to their particular relevance to the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway.

Federal Programs

Scenic Byway Funding—Within the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) leads The National Scenic Byways Program. The Program is a grassroots, collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as America's Byways® – All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways – based on one or more archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic intrinsic qualities.

The Secretary of Transportation makes grants to states and to Indian tribes to implement projects on scenic byways. Federally designated, state-designated, and tribally designated scenic byways are all equally eligible for these grants, with no order of priority. Up to \$43.5 million was authorized for the 2009 fiscal year. FHWA eligibility criteria favor large-scale, high-cost projects that provide strategic benefits to the byway and the byway traveler. Projects submitted for consideration should benefit the byway traveler's experience, whether to help manage the intrinsic qualities that support the byway's designation, shape the byway's story, interpret the story for visitors, or improve visitor facilities along the byway.

There are eight categories of eligible project activities:

- State and Tribal Programs
- Corridor Management Plan
- Safety Improvements
- Byway Facilities
- Access to Recreation
- Resource Protection
- Interpretive Information
- Marketing Program

Applicants must first consult the State or Indian tribe Byway Coordinator about eligibility questions and steps for submitting an application. State or Tribal byway coordinators establish specific criteria and procedures for making eligibility decisions, prioritizing projects and submitting applications to the FHWA division office. Some State and Indian tribe programs set application due dates that are earlier than those set by FHWA. Some programs also limit the amount of funding for which each applicant can apply.

National Scenic Byways Program funds are provided on a reimbursement basis. The maximum Federal share is 80 percent. Private, Local, Indian tribe and State funds may be used as the match share. Applications are available on the National Scenic Byway website at www.bywaysonline.org. Applicant organizations must also be registered with Grants.gov. The details of this registration process can be found on the Grants.gov website at http://grants.gov/applicants/organization_registration.jsp.

Federal Historic Tax Credits—Federal income tax credits are available for income-producing residential and commercial property owners for qualified historic restoration projects. An owner’s personal residence is not eligible. Under the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Incentive Program, owners of a property that is listed on the National Register or is within a National Register Historic District may deduct 20 percent of the cost of a major restoration project on their taxes. Restoration must be significant, exceeding the greater of the adjusted basis of the buildings or \$5,000, and work can be phased over a five-year period when there are architect’s drawings and specifications prepared for the work. Restoration work must follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. The program is administered through the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). A 10 percent tax credit is available for buildings that are not listed in the National Register but were built before 1936.

Upper Housatonic River Valley National Heritage Area—The Heritage Partnership Grant Program offers funding for planning, implementation and / or promotion of in-town historic walking tours that are intended to educate and enlighten residents and visitors to each town’s history through a thoughtfully designed thematic, self-guided walking tour. This annual grant will be awarded to one or more qualifying non-profit organizations to develop a new tour, or enhance / further promote an existing walking tour. The program awards matching grants of federal funds on a reimbursable basis. Grant recipients must match all grant awards on a minimum one-to-one basis, with cash funds or in-kind contributions. Eligible recipients are municipal governments or non-profits, and awards are for up to \$5,000 per project.

Regional Programs

Business Technical Assistance—The Hilltown Community Development Corporation (CDC) (www.hilltowncdc.org) offers individualized business technical assistance and access to business training and workshops. These services are available to individuals interested in starting a business as well as existing entrepreneurs that have businesses in operation. For more information, contact: Seth Isman, Economic Development Director: (413) 296-4536 x12 sethi@hilltowncdc.org

Brownfields Assistance—The term “brownfields” refers to properties where their reuse or redevelopment is complicated by the presence or perceived presence of hazardous materials or contamination. Brownfield cleanup is regulated in Massachusetts under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 21E. In 1998, the State Legislature amended Chapter 21E to establish significant liability relief to encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites, while

ensuring that the Commonwealth's environmental standards are met. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers the State's cleanup laws and regulations. DEP offers technical assistance for the cleanup of brownfields sites.

To promote economic opportunity, revitalize town centers, and protect the health and well being of residents and the environment, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) encourage the assessment, clean up and redevelopment of these properties. With funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, both commissions administer programs for properties within Berkshire, Hampshire and Hampden County communities. Both programs provide funding to conduct assessments of selected properties that potentially have hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants at no cost to the town or the property owner. Both commissions also administer revolving loan funds for cleanup of polluted sites, using funding provided by the US EPA to capitalize the funds. Under the current Brownfields guidelines, the loans and subgrants are offered to eligible applicants to facilitate the remediation of real properties contaminated by hazardous substances.

Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee—To preserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Wild & Scenic Westfield River, the advisory committee provides funding through three programs. The Riparian Conservation Small Grants Program offers funds to cover transaction costs in the \$3,000 to \$5,000 range for title reviews, appraisals, legal fees and other closing costs, registry fees, surveys baseline reports, monitoring plans and funds, land protection estate planning and other related fees. The Community Grants Program provides funding to each of the communities through which the Westfield River flows: Becket, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Huntington, Middlefield, Savoy, Washington, Windsor, and Worthington. Availability of funding can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per community. In addition, the Committee offers a Competitive Community Grant that offers up to \$25,000 in project funding to one to two of the communities each year (depending on the availability of funding). Those interested in applying to these programs should contact: Carrie Banks, Westfield River Wild & Scenic Coordinator at coordinator@westfieldriverwildscenic.org or (413) 268-3129, ext. 1. You can also visit: <http://www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org/grants.html>

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation—is a non-profit entity that serves as the fiduciary agency and administrator for a consortium of local endowment grant programs in the Berkshire County region. Some of the grant programs are designed to focus on a particular topic, such as education or the environment, while other programs focus on a particular geographic area, such a town or group of towns. Grant programs that are available for projects within Lee and Becket include these grant programs:

- Berkshire Environmental Endowment supports projects that focus on water quality and related land resources.

- South Berkshire County Fund supports projects that benefit the community in the following areas: arts and culture, education, the environment and health and social services. Lee is the only Byway community eligible for this program.
- Central Berkshire Fund supports projects that benefit the community in the following areas: arts and culture, education, the environment and health and social services. Becket is the only Byway community eligible for this program.
- Green Pastures Fund – to preserve and encourage small, community-based agricultural ventures.

Highland Communities Initiative—A program of The Trustees of the Reservations, The Highland Communities Initiative provides awards of up to \$5,000 for projects and programs designed to preserve the natural and cultural landscapes of the Highlands region through land conservation or community preservation. Eligible applicants include non-profits and municipalities. The towns in the Byway region that are eligible to apply are Becket, Chester, Huntington and Russell

Northeast Utilities Community Grant Program—Through its community grant program, Northeast Utilities issues small grants to nonprofit organizations to protect or preserve the environment, or teach others to do so.

Local Banks—In addition to the regional entities already listed, many of the local banks in the Byway region offer small community grant programs. The focuses of these grants are varied, depending on the particular bank offering them. Although these grants typically offer relatively small grant amounts, they should not be overlooked as they can be used to leverage larger grants from state or federal programs.

State Programs

There are several state programs that offer loan and grant programs that could be used to support improvement projects along the Byway. The Executive Office of Energy and the Environment (EOEEA) offers a wide variety of programs, focusing on projects that support improvements in the areas of land conservation, water quality protection, wildlife and rare species protection, agriculture, waste management and energy. The EOEEA has compiled a very useful guide on these programs, shown in Appendix H.

Housatonic River Natural Resources Damages—A grant program funded by General Electric, the Housatonic River Natural Resources Damages is part of a Superfund settlement to clean PCBs from the Housatonic River. The fund supports projects that develop and implement restoration plans within the river's watershed area, and include protecting or improving habitat, recreational opportunities or environmental education/outreach. Only

projects within the town of Lee are eligible for this grant program. More information can be found at www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/.

Recreational Trail Program— Part of the national Recreational Trails Program, which is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Recreational Trail Program provides grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000 on a reimbursement basis for a variety of trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects throughout Massachusetts. Funds are disbursed to each state to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The program is administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in partnership with the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) —MHC administers two grant programs. The first is the Survey and Planning Grant Program, which provides 50% matching federal funds for the preparation of community surveys, preservation plans, preparation of historic district studies and legislation, archaeological surveys, nominations to the National Register, and educational preservation programs. Eligible applicants are local historical commissions, Certified Local Governments, local and state agencies, educational institutions, and private organizations. The second is the Preservation Projects Fund, which serves as the “bricks and mortar” grant program, providing funds for the restoration, rehabilitation, stabilization, and documentation of historic and archaeological properties owned by municipalities or nonprofit organizations. Through this fund, 50% matching grants are available to qualifying properties listed on the State Register to ensure their physical preservation. Scopes of work for projects range from the acquisition of an endangered property, to the restoration of an historic building, to research projects such as historic structures reports, archaeological data recovery projects, or study of innovative preservation techniques.

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)— DHCD administers three grant programs that may be useful to communities along the Byway. Each year DHCD receives Community Development Block Grant money from the federal government to be used for grants to cities and towns for a range of community needs, including business assistance, infrastructure, community/public facilities, housing rehabilitation or development, and downtown revitalization. Grants are available through the Division of Community Services and must meet one of the following National Objectives as defined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- benefit a majority of low- and moderate-income people;
- aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight;
- or meet an urgent condition posing a serious threat to the health and welfare of the community where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission manages CDBG programs on behalf of the Byway towns of Russell, Huntington, and Chester. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission provides technical and administrative assistance to the towns of Lee and Becket.

The DHCD also coordinates the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, which offers a range of services and assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. Through this program's Technical Assistance Site Visit Program, the Initiative provides up to \$10,000 in consultant services to address a specific issue that will support a community's downtown revitalization effort.

DHCD also oversees the Community Development Action Grant Program (CDAG), which offers funding to help revitalize disinvested or deteriorated neighborhoods, stimulate new economic development, and leverage private investment in communities. Any Massachusetts city or town is eligible to apply to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for CDAG funds. CDAG funding is available for publicly-owned or publicly-managed projects. CDAG funds can be used in a variety of ways, including the installation, improvements, repairs, rehabilitation or reconstruction of buildings and other structures, facades, sidewalks, streets, and utility distribution systems. CDAG funds can also be used for the demolition of existing structures and relocation assistance. CDAG applications are evaluated based on the following criteria: the number of jobs created; the current degree of economic distress and physical deterioration of the project area; the extent of committed financial participation by other public and private entities; and the extent to which the project is consistent with the applicant's community development plan(s) and with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development priorities.

Expedited Permitting Process—In 2006, the State Legislature enacted regulations (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 43D) to support an expedited and streamlined municipal permit process for targeted economic development projects. An established, predictable local permitting process is considered advantageous by potential developers. For towns that choose to enact Expedited Local Permitting, this program gives them the ability to promote commercial/industrial development on pre-approved parcels, known as "Priority Development Sites" (PDS), by offering an expedited, streamlined local permitting process. Towns that participate are eligible for a one-time technical assistance grant to aid them with the creation of a streamlined permitting process and for site specific pre-development work. The goal is to create a transparent and efficient municipal process, which guarantees local permitting decisions on designated PDS within 180 days. This requires coordination of municipal staff and town boards including the select board and/or town administrator, planning board, zoning board of appeals, conservation commission, fire chief, the historic commission, and board of health. With PDS designation and state grants, there also needs to be a "point of contact" for all questions regarding the site, generally the town planner, town administrator, or a representative from the select board.

Eligible PDS are sites that have been identified and approved by the town with permission from the property owner(s) that are in a commercial, industrial or mixed use zone and can

accommodate the development or re-development of a building(s) of at least 50,000 square feet. Communities with PDS will receive priority consideration for economic development grant programs such as CDAG and Brownfields funding, as well as marketing assistance for the sites. Through a State grant, PVPC can provide technical assistance to help towns identify possible PDS and apply for technical assistance grants.

Transportation Enhancement—The Transportation Enhancement Program, through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation (www.eot.state.ma.us), is a grant program targeted to provide opportunities to “preserve, restore, and enhance components of the surface transportation system.” Eligible projects include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic easement acquisition, and streetscapes, among other less traditional transportation projects. Municipalities are eligible to apply for these funds, and encouraged to work with their regional planning agency (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission for Berkshire County, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission for Hampden and Hampshire counties).

Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Tourism Grants— Grants are offered to the communities that are adjacent to and have been impacted by the construction of the Mass. Turnpike (US Route 90). EXPLAIN. The Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. has received funds from this grant program on behalf of its five towns to conduct tourist-oriented projects, including funds to locate its mobile historic exhibit in the Springfield Conference and Visitor Center, to install a gateway sign in Russell and to upgrade the Byway’s website.

Massachusetts Cultural Council—The promotion of creative-economy businesses and those targeting visitors are an important part of creating economic opportunity through the scenic byway program. Like any other business, technical assistance provided by community development corporations is a valuable resource. An additional, potential resource is the Massachusetts Cultural Council (www.massculturalcouncil.org). The Council offers different grant programs available to individuals, schools, cultural organizations, and others through direct programs or through local cultural councils.

State Tax Credit Programs—Tax credit programs allow property developers to access capital to fund their redevelopment projects by selling credits to another entity that can off-set their own state tax liability by using them. It is important to note that tax credit programs require significant work in advance for a successful application.

The Massachusetts Historic Commission (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)—The Massachusetts Historic Commission manages the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. The use of this program is targeted for the rehabilitation of historically significant properties. The revitalization of historic properties for economic use can be more expensive than other projects, especially when trying to make the property workable for today’s businesses, while maintaining the historic character and quality of the structure. In some cases, these credits can make the difference between a costly building rehabilitation project being economically feasible or not. As a result, these tax credits help to save endangered properties and preserve the character of a community. According to the Commission, under

this program a certified rehabilitation project on an income-producing property is eligible to receive up to 20 percent of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state tax credits. There is an annual limit on the amount of tax credits available through the Commonwealth's program, so selection criteria ensure the funds are distributed to the projects that provide the most public benefit.

The State Brownfields Tax Credit—The State Brownfields Tax Credit allows taxpayers a credit against their tax liability for the costs incurred to rehabilitate contaminated property owned or leased for business purposes and located within an economically distressed area. Recent legislation has extended the State Brownfields Tax to August 2011. More information about this tax credit is available from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (www.mass.gov/dor).

Other Resources

Community Preservation Act (CPA)—Signed into law in 2000, the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (M.G.L., Chapter 44B), gives communities a funding source for projects related to historic preservation, open space protection, and affordable housing. Municipalities adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) on a local basis, through a ballot referendum. Communities that approve the CPA can impose a property tax surcharge of up to 3 percent. Exemptions can be made for the first \$100,000 of residential property value for homes owned by low-income households or seniors of moderate income or for commercial and industrial properties. The funds collected through this surcharge are set aside in a local Community Preservation Fund along with available State matching funds. Monies accruing in this fund are to be spent on historic preservation, open space (excluding recreation), and affordable housing with at least 10 percent of the annual receipts going toward each category. Spending can be deferred until needed. The community determines how it would like to distribute the remaining 70 percent of funds to any combination of the three categories, including public recreation. Currently, the State match for CPA funds is up to 100 percent. Becket is the only Byway town to have adopted the CPA to date. As of October 2009, 142 communities in the Commonwealth (40 percent of all communities) have adopted the CPA. In addition to Becket, these include the following communities in Berkshire, Hampshire and Hampden counties respectively: Lenox, Stockbridge, Williamstown, Amherst, Belchertown, Easthampton, Goshen, Hadley, Hatfield, Northampton, Southampton, Agawam, East Longmeadow, Granville, Hampden, Longmeadow, Monson, Southwick, Westfield, West Springfield, and Wilbraham.