

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

SCENIC BYWAY



CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

OCTOBER 2018



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1 Introduction

The Western Highlands Scenic Byway is located in Vernon and Hardyston Townships, in northeastern Sussex County, New Jersey. Designated a state scenic byway in 2014, the 21.4-mile route captures the region's rich heritage, outstanding recreational opportunities, and abundant nature. Key features of the byway corridor include a distinctive section of the Appalachian Trail, the prehistoric Black Creek site, notable historic farmsteads and Revolutionary War-era buildings, the popular Mountain Creek resort, and extensive conservation areas, including the Newark Pequannock Watershed. The Western Highlands Scenic Byway is one of eight scenic byways in New Jersey.

Byway Route

The byway route, shown in Figure 1-1, consists of a north-south “spine” of 12.5 miles and a loop west of the spine just under 9 miles long. The byway spine travels north along CR 515 from its intersection with NJ 23 in Hardyston, through the preserved lands of the Newark Pequannock Watershed and into Vernon, where it continues north on NJ 94 through preserved farmland to the New York border. The loop begins at the intersection of CR 644 (Vernon Crossing Road) and NJ 94 in Vernon, travels northwest on CR 644, then south on CR 517, and northeast on NJ 94 through Vernon's town center, where it rejoins the byway spine at CR 515. The loop portion of the route was modified during the development of this plan.¹

¹ The loop previously included portions of Sand Hill Road and McPeek Road. In response to local officials' concerns about byway travelers using these narrow local roads, the loop was modified and now consists exclusively of State and County roads.

Corridor Management Plan

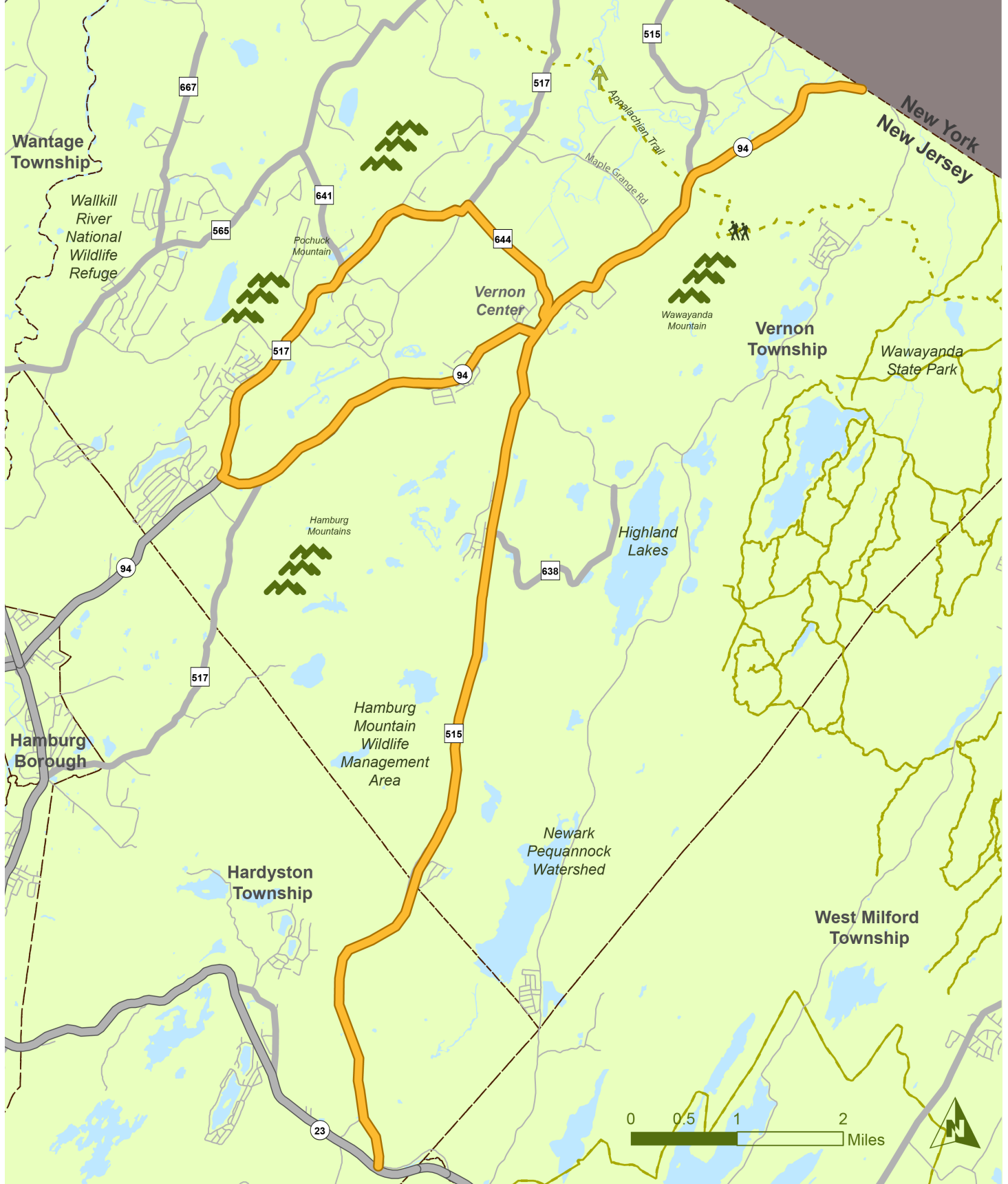
This plan describes the byway corridor and its special features, and outlines strategies to enhance its unique qualities, build an appreciation of these resources, and encourage tourism. The plan sets forth a vision and goals for the byway's future, along with practical steps to make its special features more apparent and accessible to visitors. A companion document, the Sign Location Plan, identifies locations for byway identification and directional signs in accordance with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Guidelines for the Development of Scenic Byways Signage.

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) was developed through the dedicated efforts of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Committee, a collaborative working group representing civic groups, local and County officials, and other interested individuals, under the leadership of the Vernon Township Historical Society. The plan builds on the extensive research undertaken by the Historical Society in its initial application for scenic byway designation. It incorporates ideas and suggestions from community residents who participated in the public outreach process, which included public workshops in October 2017 and May 2018. The CMP and Sign Location Plan were prepared with the assistance of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, with funding from the Federal Highway Administration.

Planning Process

The planning process for the byway included an inventory of corridor characteristics, a review of local and agency plans and policies that may shape its future development, and assessment of the byway's unique qualities, opportunities for enhancement, and potential for niche tourism. Starting with the nomination application previously submitted by the Vernon Township Historical Society for byway designation, the study team and the Scenic Byway Committee completed an assessment of corridor characteristics. Next, the study team worked with the Byway Committee to identify potential management strategies for the byway, set priorities, and develop the recommendations outlined in this plan. To accomplish these steps and meet the requirements of the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program, the study team undertook the following:

- Review of existing background documents and County and local plans;
- Field inventories and mapping of corridor characteristics;
- A Visual Survey of the views from the byway roads, conducted with community volunteers (Appendix A);
- An Institutional Survey of agencies and organizations with potential roles in shaping the byway's future, conducted via in-person and telephone interviews (Appendix B);
- Analysis of transportation characteristics, roadway usage and crash history, and
- Gathering of data and input at eight Scenic Byway Committee meetings and two public meetings.



Legend

- Byway Route
- - - Appalachian Trail
- Hiking Trails
- - - Municipal Border
- U.S./State Routes
- County Routes
- Local Roads

Figure 1-1: Route of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway



D. STEPHENS
BROOK-SIDE-FARM.

Vision and Goals

The Western Highlands Scenic Byway Committee adopted the following vision statement and goals for the byway in November 2017.

Vision Statement

The Western Highlands Scenic Byway celebrates and preserves the historic and natural beauty of Vernon and Hardyston Townships and serves as a gateway to the outstanding recreational opportunities of the Vernon Valley. Through stewardship of the corridor, enhancement of the visitor's experience, interpretive programs and tourism promotion, the Byway supports the local economy, encourages entrepreneurship and enriches the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Goals

1. Encourage voluntary measures to preserve and enhance the scenic character of the landscape along the Byway and protect its historic and natural resources.
2. Enhance the visitor's enjoyment, safety, and comfort while visiting the Byway.
3. Increase awareness of the region's history and significance through interpretive and educational programs for varied audiences.
4. Strengthen the linkage between the Byway and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and improve the trail crossing.
5. Partner with public agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, interested organizations, and the business community to promote four-season outdoor recreation, heritage tourism, and agritourism throughout the Byway Corridor.



1826

Stockholm
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

3 Corridor Characteristics

Statement of Significance

A byway's unique qualities determine its significance and form the basis for the management and interpretive strategies in the CMP. Management strategies are designed to preserve or enhance the byway's special qualities, while interpretive strategies help to convey their significance to byway visitors.

The National Scenic Byways Program has established six intrinsic qualities, or criteria, for assessing the significance of a byway: historic, archeological, cultural, scenic, natural and recreational. The New Jersey Scenic Byways Program also uses these six criteria to assess a byway's significance. In evaluating these characteristics, the byway corridor can be defined as lands and places along the route, including the road itself, the view from the road, places to visit along the way, and resources connected to the byway that contribute to its character, such as connecting parks and important features a short distance away.² While the Western Highlands Scenic Byway exhibits all six intrinsic qualities, its historic and recreational qualities are recognized as the most significant.

Historic Qualities

The byway is a showcase of the many layers of Western Highlands history, from Native Americans and the first European settlers, who were Dutch, through the many changes brought by 20th century industry, tourism, and suburban development.

Most striking to the casual visitor is the farming history still visible and vibrant along the byway. A notable element on the northern end of the byway is a corridor of permanently preserved farmland

²Definition adapted from Millstone Valley Scenic Byway

stretching approximately two miles, from the Van Dokkenburg Farm (c. 1820) at the corner of NJ 94 and Maple Grange Road to the New York State line.³ This section of NJ 94 offers some of the most significant scenic views on the byway. The road was a King's Highway prior to the Revolutionary War, and was used by the Continental Army. Samuel and John Adams passed there on their way from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, as did George Washington on his way from Newburgh, NY. Vice President Aaron Burr was a large landowner in Vernon during this time. In addition to farming, rural industries contributed to the settlement patterns along the byway, and traces of old mills and blacksmith forges are still present.

Farming, Village Life, and Rural Industry

Numerous historic properties and structures illustrative of the area's early settlement and evolving economy have been documented by Vernon's historians. Figure 3-1 shows the location of key historic sites.

The following are among the most significant 18th-19th century properties along the byway spine⁴:

- Stockholm United Methodist Church (1826), listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an outstandingly well-preserved example of an early 19th century church
- Margarum Farm, the only surviving 19th century farmstead along CR 515 in the Newark Pequannock Watershed, which originally included a gristmill, sawmill, and forge

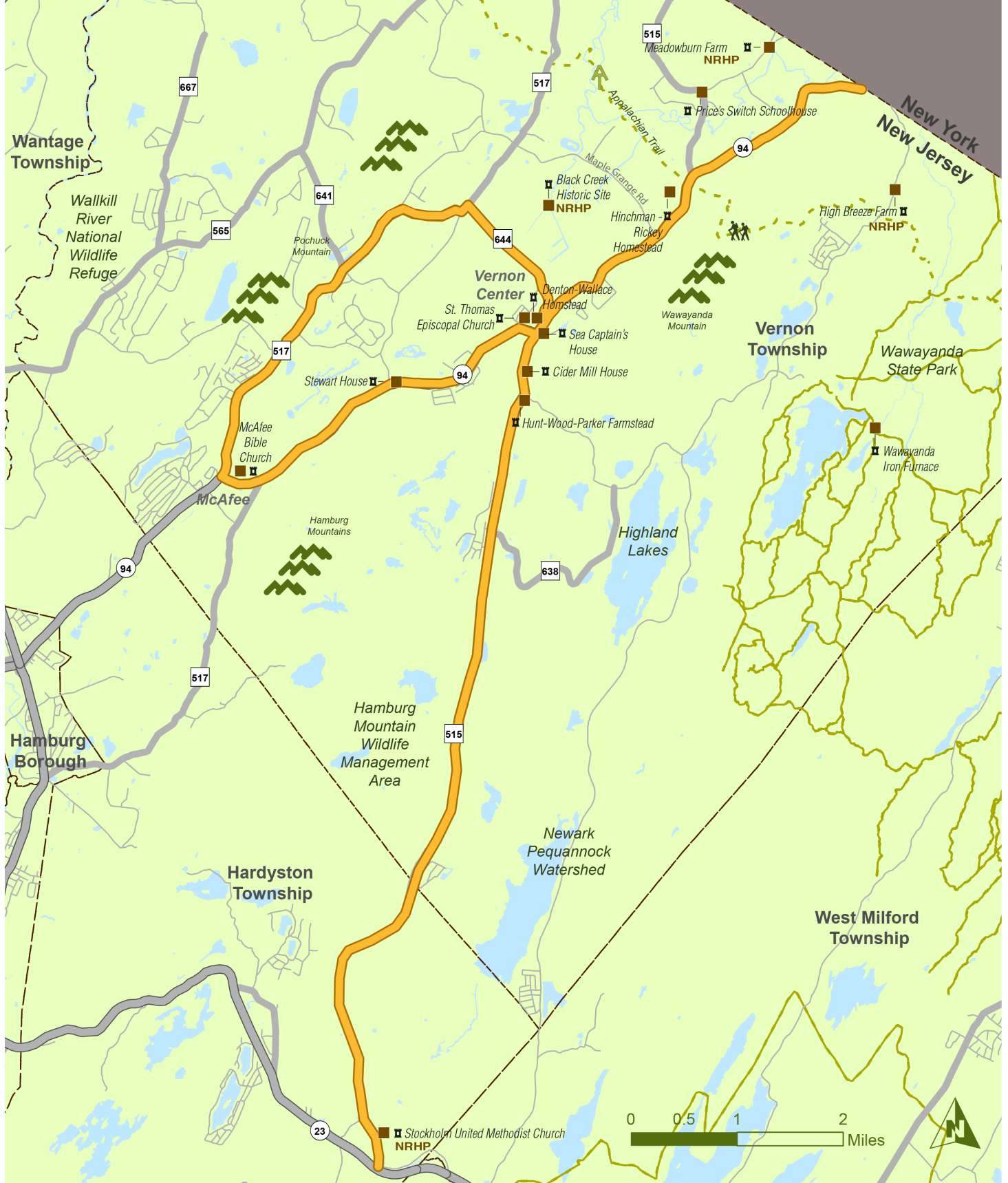
- Hunt-Wood-Parker Farmstead, a c. 1790 white clapboard farmhouse and its large barn, formerly called Cedar Crest Farm
- Cider Mill House, a well-preserved homestead c. 1770 (originally the William Crampton House), and a c. 1900 steam-powered cider mill
- Hinchman-Rickey Farm, 1770 with farmhouse, c. 1850 (the Hinchman family fed the Continental Army when it camped in Vernon)
- Price Homestead, a Victorian home with Mansard roof, and its nearby barns
- Theobald Farm (formerly the DeKay/Hynard Farm), c. 1810
- Wawayanda Homestead Farm (originally the DeKay family homestead), 1827



Hinchman-Rickey Homestead, 1912 (courtesy of Jamie Rickey)

³ Information based on Ronald J. Dupont Jr., "Western Highlands Scenic Byway Cultural and Historic Resources" 2014

⁴ Adapted from Dupont, op cit



Legend

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Byway Route | U.S./State Routes | NRHP National Register of Historic Places |
| Appalachian Trail | County Routes | |
| Hiking Trails | Local Roads | |
| Municipal Border | Historic Sites | |

Figure 3-1: Key Historical Sites

The village of Vernon features additional historic structures:

- Vernon United Methodist Church, 1873
- Old Methodist Parsonage, c. 1840
- St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1847, a Carpenter Gothic church and adjacent Vernon Churchyard burial ground serving both the Episcopal and Methodist churches
- Sea Captain's House, c. 1775-1810, also known as Winans house, where noted railroad inventor Ross Winans developed the pivoting "car-truck"
- Old Vernon Library, c. 1850
- Denton-Wallace Homestead, c. 1835
- Edsall Homestead, c. 1780

- Vernon Grange Store, c. 1880
- Yanzer Homestead, c. 1780
- Vernon Hotel, c. 1830
- Shaw Homestead, c. 1770
- Denton Store, 1883



McAfee Village, 1906 (courtesy of Vernon Township Historical Society)



Vernon Churchyard burial ground

The byway loop traverses the historic village of McAfee at the junction of CR 517 and NJ 94. According to Vernon historian Ronald J. Dupont, Jr., McAfee was a substantial industrial village from the 1870s through the 1920s. Its growth was prompted by the arrival of the railroad in 1871, which provided access to an iron mine, limestone quarries, and lime kilns and led to the construction of stores and taverns.⁵ The two largest companies were the New Jersey Lime Company and Bethlehem Steel. The Playboy Club at Great Gorge, now Legends, was built on the former Bethlehem Steel

⁵Ronald J. Dupont, Jr., *Images of America: Vernon Township*, Arcadia Publishing: 2002

quarry property. Limestone cliffs are visible from the byway, and the remains of limestone kilns are present behind the McAfee Bible Church.⁶ This quaint neo-Gothic style church was built in 1921 and is one of the few remaining historic buildings in McAfee. The Stewart House (late 18th or early 19th century) is another noteworthy historic property on the loop. Additionally, the Longwell Cemetery, with about fifty tombstones dating from 1778-1915, is located behind the satellite tracking station on the loop.⁷

Significant properties a short distance from the byway include the stone age Native American Black Creek Site (described in the next section on archaeological qualities), Price's Switch Schoolhouse, High Breeze Farm, and Meadowburn Farm. Area transportation history is also represented by an historic railroad depot on Vernon Crossing Road.

- Price's Switch Schoolhouse, c. 1840, on Price's Switch Road (CR 515), was the last functioning one-room school in Sussex County, operating until 1958. The schoolhouse contains the original furnishings, outdoor privies, and coal shed.
- High Breeze Farm, c. 1818, with barns and outbuildings built between 1860 and 1935, was operated by four generations of the Barrett family through 1986, using 19th century farming methods. The farm is now part of Wawayanda State Park and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At one point it served as a living history museum and displayed historic farm equipment; currently it operates as a working farm.



Vernon's former railroad depot, now in use as a deli (courtesy of Vernon Township Historical Society)



Price's Switch Schoolhouse, the last one-room school in Sussex County

⁶Jennie Sweetman, "Vernon's limestone kilns remain in McAfee Valley," New Jersey Herald History column, April 23, 2012

⁷Ronald J. Dupont, Jr., Vernon 200: A Bicentennial History of the Township of Vernon, New Jersey, 1972-1992, General Press, Highland Lakes, 1994

- Meadowburn Farm, on Meadowburn Road, was built by the DeKay family, Vernon's first settlers. It was later the home of Helena Rutherford Ely, a noted gardening author who helped to popularize perennial gardening in the early 20th century. The farm is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Conservation History

Early 20th century land conservation efforts represent another distinctive theme in the byway's history. From the 1890s through 1940, much of the land in the vicinity of what is now the byway was preserved by the formation of the Newark Pequannock Watershed and the Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area. The villages of Snufftown/Stockholm and Williamsville were razed to form the Watershed, and remnants of these villages can be found along the byway. Moreover, in the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps replanted several abandoned fields along CR 515 with stands of conifers that can be seen today from the byway.⁹ The early history of the Appalachian Trail, which has passed through Vernon since 1925, is a related part of the area's conservation history.

Newark Pequannock Watershed

The byway passes through the Newark Pequannock Watershed, formed by the City of Newark beginning in the 1890s to create a source of drinking water for the city. According to Vernon historian Ronald J. Dupont, Jr., "The area was chosen for the quality of its water and generally sparse settlement. Purchases continued through the 1920s, which ultimately created a 35,000-acre watershed protecting four man-made reservoirs... While the establishment of the reservoir was for the practical purpose of protecting their drinking water supply, the City also realized (as noted in one 1913 history) that they were 'creating in the Pequannock Watershed one of the most beautiful parks in the whole Eastern United States, a park in which the natural beauties of this rugged country will be maintained.' The byway crosses six miles of almost uninterrupted forest through the watershed and does indeed preserve the rugged beauty of the area."⁸

⁸Dupont, "Western Highlands Scenic Byway Cultural and Historic Resources," op cit

⁹Dupont, op cit

Archaeological Qualities

The byway corridor is also significant from an archaeological perspective. The area contains the Black Creek Site, an important Native American settlement believed to be in nearly continuous use from around 8,000 B.C. to the 1700s. The area was rich in plants and wildlife, including mastodons, mammoths, giant beaver and caribou. Rock sources were also abundant: jasper, quartz, shale, and black chert supplied valuable materials for tool-making and for trade that was conducted over a wide area.

One of the last Lenape settlements in New Jersey, the Black Creek Site is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places and is accessible to visitors a short distance from the byway, off Maple Grange Road. Also present in Vernon are the remains of prehistoric quarries that Native Americans used to obtain stone for projectile points, scrapers, and other utensils.

More recent archaeological sites include the remains of 19th century farmsteads, mines, and mills, as well as several historic burial grounds, including the DeKay Cemetery. The remains of the Seward Homestead, including the farmhouse foundation and slave quarters, are located just west of CR 515 in Hardyston. (Colonel John Seward was known as the “Terror of the Tories” during the Revolutionary War.) A short distance from the byway in Wawayanda State Park, visitors can view an iron furnace from 1845, one of the only remaining structures in the 19th century industrial village of Wawayanda. Hiking trails provide access

¹⁰ Vernon Township Historical Society, Black Creek brochure

¹¹ Vernon Township Historical Society, op cit.

Black Creek Site

The 40-acre Black Creek Site preserves an area where Native Americans lived for about 300 generations--from about 8,000 B.C. until the 1700s. Archaeologists have established this timeline based on known changes in the style of spearpoints: the bifurcate base spearpoint, the oldest type recovered from the site, is about 8,000-10,000 years old. The site was rediscovered in 1989 and is now part of Wawayanda State Park.¹⁰

“By 3000 B.C., point styles had changed, nearby flint quarries were in operation, and the local population was expanding. Several hunting and fishing camps were established at small glacial lakes in the surrounding mountains.” Following a population decline, “corn, bean, and squash seeds arrived and the population expanded again around 500 A.D. The Lenape bow arrived, and by 900 A.D. arrowhead production was in full swing.” Archaeologists have discovered Dutch trade beads from the 1600s, indicating contact with Europeans. However, shortly after the arrival of the Dutch, Black Creek was abandoned. Most Munsee Lenape from northern New Jersey were forced to relocate to the west and to Canada.¹¹

The Black Creek Site is open to the public daily from 8 a.m. to sunset. Admission is free. A self-guided walking tour begins from the parking lot of Maple Grange Park.



to the remains of open pit iron mines and the foundations of a gristmill, blacksmith shop, carpentry shop, company office and one-room schoolhouse that were also part of the village.¹² Closer to the byway, but less accessible to visitors, are the mine shafts and ruins of the Williams Iron Mine (c. 1815), located along an old woods road to the east of CR 515, south of the entrance to the Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area. The Williams mine operated through the 1880s and the ruins include stone buildings, ore roasters, and the foundations of four company-owned workers' houses.¹³



Wawayanda charcoal blast furnace 1845 (Courtesy of Wilma Frey)

Appalachian Trail and Wawayanda State Park

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is one of the chief assets along the byway. A small parking lot is available on the northbound side of NJ 94 that provides access to several distinctive features of the trail. These include the Stairway to Heaven, a steep climb (in part on rock stairs) to the top of Wawayanda Mountain, and a secondary path to the Pinwheel Vista, an outcropping providing panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. To the west of NJ 94, the trail traverses a pasture and joins a unique boardwalk section of the trail. One of the only wheelchair accessible portions of the entire Appalachian Trail, the boardwalk provides open views of fields, wetlands, and mountains in the distance. The boardwalk's popularity with day hikers has resulted in parking capacity issues both at NJ 94 and at its western entrance on CR 517 (off the byway).

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference estimates that some 1,900 through-hikers cross the byway at NJ 94 annually. The trail's importance to Vernon is reflected in the township's recent designation as an Appalachian Trail Community, one of only two such communities in New Jersey.

Wawayanda State Park plays an important role in maintaining this portion of the Appalachian Trail, and offers another 60 miles of blazed and mapped trails within the 34,000-acre park, ranging from easy to strenuous. The state park also offers swimming, boating, mountain biking, horseback riding, and group campsites.

¹²Jeff Stoveken, New Jersey Herald History column, "Wawayanda Village can still be found on Vernon Mountain," New Jersey Herald History column, April 4, 2015

¹³Dupont, op cit

Recreational Qualities

The byway provides access to an exceptional array of recreational opportunities. The area is a year-round destination for outdoor enthusiasts interested in hiking, skiing, golfing, biking, and other activities.¹⁴ Among the highlights are the Appalachian Trail, Wawayanda State Park, and year-round activities at Mountain Creek resort. Figure 3-2 shows the location of key recreational sites.

Hiking is a popular pursuit in the region, with the Appalachian Trail crossing the byway in the heart of Vernon Valley. There are also numerous hiking trails nearby in Wawayanda State Park.

The byway offers direct access to skiing and golfing, both popular activities that are important to the local economy. The Mountain Creek resort, located on the byway loop, offers skiing, snowboarding, and snow tubing in the winter. In warmer weather, it offers a ropes course, zip line, water park, and mountain biking. Other popular resort destinations include the Great Gorge golf course (one of seven golf courses in the area) and Treescape Aerial Adventure Park.

The Crystal Springs resort also provides numerous recreational facilities, some of which are located on the byway loop and others in nearby Hamburg and Franklin. Activities include golf, horseback riding, a sports club, lake swimming, boating, fishing, and archery, among others.

Ice skating is available nearby at Skylands Ice World on NJ 23 in Hardyston. Public skating is offered year round, along with skating lessons, open hockey for all ages, and a Friday night “Ice Jam.”



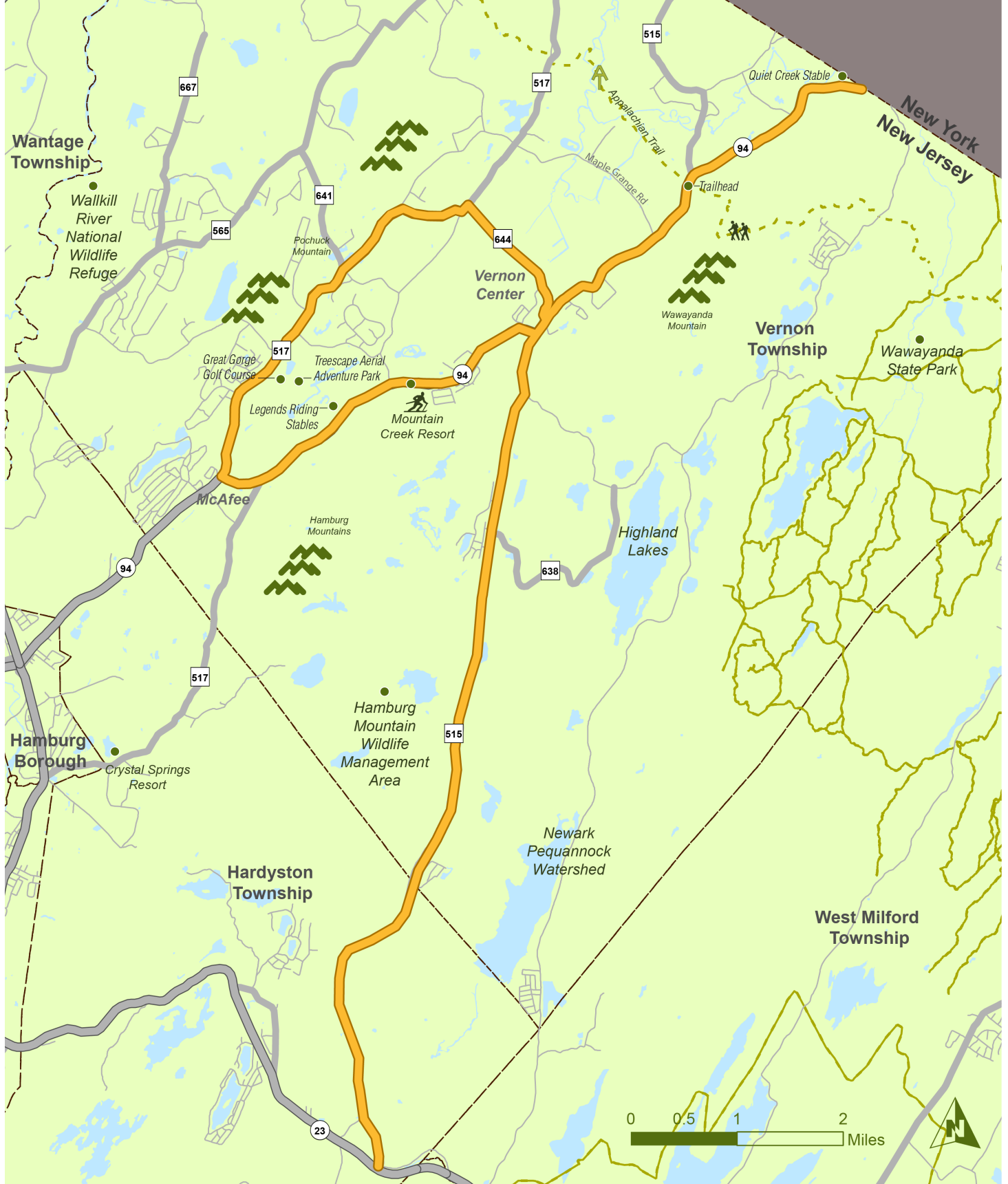
Skiing lesson at Mountain Creek

Horseback riding is available at several locations in the byway corridor, including at Quiet Creek Stable on NJ 94 near the New York state line and at Legends Riding Stable on the loop, as well as in Wawayanda State Park.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping are other viable outdoor pursuits in the region. Opportunities include hunting and fishing by special permit in the Newark Watershed lands along CR 515 and in the Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Together, these lands are ideal hunting grounds for White-tailed Deer, turkey, ducks, small game, and Ruffed Grouse.¹⁵ Fishing is popular on streams, lakes, and ponds such as Green Swamp, Great Gorge Lake, Danny’s Pond, and Indian Pond in the WMA. The State Division of Fish and Wildlife stocks some of the lakes, while local resorts stock others. Pascack Creek, a headwater stream of the Pequannock River, is a little-known trout

¹⁴Adapted from Dennis Miranda, “Introduction to the Western Highlands Scenic Byway,” 2014

¹⁵Miranda, op cit.



Legend

- Byway Route
- Appalachian Trail
- Hiking Trails
- Municipal Border
- U.S./State Routes
- County Routes
- Local Roads
- Recreation Sites

Figure 3-2: Key Recreational Sites

stream that parallels the CR 515 corridor from its source to Route 23.¹⁶ Fishing is also an option on the Wallkill River at the nearby Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge.

Canoeing and kayaking can also be pursued on the Wallkill River. One of the three access points is near the byway at CR 565 (Glenwood Road). Also a short distance from the byway are three interconnected creeks: Wawayanda Creek, Pochuck Creek, and Black Creek. According to NJ Audubon, birds, butterflies, amphibians and dragonflies are abundant along the creeks, providing interest for beginners and experienced naturalists.¹⁷ The byway provides many opportunities for bird-watching and nature exploration, as discussed in the following section.

Natural Qualities

The byway is outstanding for its wealth of natural resources and the degree of protection in place for its natural habitats. Thousands of acres of protected, preserved



Red-tailed hawk, a common sight along the byway

¹⁶Miranda, op cit.

¹⁷New Jersey Audubon, www.njwildlifetrails.org, 2017

Bird Species in Vernon

Winter

Red-tailed Hawk

Song Sparrow

Tree Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow

Dark-Eyed Junco

Northern Cardinal

Downy Woodpecker

Red-bellied Woodpecker

White-breasted Nuthatch

Black-capped Chickadee

Spring

Great Blue Heron

Red-tailed Hawk

American Kestrel

Tree Swallow

Eastern Phoebe

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Eastern Bluebird

Red-winged Blackbird

Yellow Warbler

Warbling Vireo

Baltimore Oriole

Common Yellowthroat

Gray Catbird

Blue-headed Vireo

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Black-throated Green Warbler

Source: New Jersey Audubon, 2017

land are found along the byway, including the Newark Pequannock Watershed, Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area, and Wawayanda State Park. The Highlands Preservation Act of 2004 provides

additional environmental protection throughout the region.

Protected habitats range from large tracts of contiguous forest in the mountains to the limestone woods, pastoral fields, and marshes of Vernon Valley.¹⁸

“Formerly a prehistoric lake, Vernon Valley is now a mosaic of pastoral fields, old farms, abundant wetlands, forested groves, and various streams and creeks. A remnant feature of the prehistoric lake is the occurrence of limestone formations throughout the valley. The limestone’s alkalinity affects the local geology where seeps, meadows, and pools provide microhabitats for rare and threatened species of plants and animals, such as the federally endangered Bog Turtle and Showy Lady’s Slipper.”¹⁹

Raptors, waterfowl, and other wildlife use a migration corridor that formed in this valley 15,000 years ago as the ice age ended.²⁰

A vast complex of wetlands associated with the Black Creek Marshes and the Pochuck Creek bottomlands is just adjacent to the byway. These wetlands are largely unspoiled and protected due in part to ownership by Wawayanda State Park and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.²¹

The region’s rich biodiversity encompasses 120 species of nesting birds, 45 species of mammals, 50 species of herbs, and hundreds of types of flora.²² Bird watching, botanizing, searching for butterflies, and other nature-

based study are possible almost anywhere along the byway. The red-tailed hawk, shown in the byway’s logo, is a common sight.

- The Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge serves as a breeding ground for the American Woodcock; the refuge provides information on suggested times and locations to observe these unique birds.
- The Janet Van Gelder Wildlife Sanctuary, a New Jersey Audubon site, is located near the byway loop, on Lounsbury Hollow Road (off CR 517).
- NJ Audubon has also mapped out a birding and wildlife tour close to the byway, known as the NJ Skylands Birding and Wildlife Trails Sussex County—River, Ridge, and Highland Tour.

The table on the previous page lists bird species that can be found along three Vernon creeks (Wawayanda Creek, Pochuck Creek, and Black Creek) in the winter and spring. In the summer, paddlers on these creeks may see frogs, toads, salamanders, the northern water snake, garter snake, dragonflies, and butterflies; in late June or early July, it is possible to see 30-40 species of butterflies. In the fall, one may see migrating Monarch butterflies, Black bear, woodchuck, muskrat and chipmunk.²³ Among the area’s nocturnal wildlife are owls, coyotes, bobcats, and minks.

¹⁸Miranda, op cit.

¹⁹Miranda, op cit.

²⁰Vernon Township Historical Society, op cit.

²¹Miranda, op cit.

²²Miranda, op cit.

²³New Jersey Audubon, www.njwildlifetrails.org, 2017

Cultural Qualities

The cultural qualities of the byway are influenced by its rural character, farming traditions, and the area's role as a destination for outdoor recreation. Vernon is home to many working farms, some dating back to the 18th or 19th century. Local produce is available directly from some of these farms or through their CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), and at a farm stand on the loop.

- Heaven Hill Farm on NJ 94 is a key agritourism destination; the farm offers several large-scale seasonal events, including an annual pumpkin festival and corn maze.
- Other seasonal options in the byway corridor include apple-picking and cut-your-own Christmas trees.
- Mystic Valley Farm on NJ 94 is a purveyor of locally grown meat.
- Meadowburn Farm holds open houses on several summer weekends to open its noted perennial garden to the public, as well as holding periodic garden tours.
- Hinchman-Rickey Farm holds occasional concerts and events, and offers a concert venue.
- Vernon Valley Farm offers occasional canning classes.
- Artisanal products include Rose Mountain Chocolates, located just off the byway on Highlands Lakes

Road (CR 638), cheeses made at High Breeze Farm and other area farms, and maple syrup from High Breeze Farm, Hinchman-Rickey Farm, and Mount Vernon Farms.

Various art, music and cultural events occur annually:

- Taste of Vernon is held in April at Heaven Hill Farm and features local chefs, caterers, and produce.
- Vernon Day and Food Truck Festival, an annual family event, is held in June at Maple Grange Community Park.
- Vernon Street Fair and Farmers Expo is held in September on Main Street by the Vernon Chamber of Commerce.
- The Black Creek Festival is held in October by the Vernon Township Historical Society; the Society also holds a regular History and Archaeology Day.
- Oktoberfest is held each year by Mountain Creek with music, food, and authentic German beer.
- Arts and Heritage Weekend is a county-wide event each October that features an historic site from each town in Sussex County, including Vernon and Hardyston; this event is hosted by the Arts and Heritage Council.

An intrinsic part of Vernon's culture is its longstanding role as a recreational destination. According to Ronald J. Dupont, Jr., people have been coming to Vernon for recreation since before the Civil War.

“The railroad first brought tourists to our town, and in later years lake camping, boarding houses, lake clubs, and finally summer cottage communities perpetuated Vernon’s role as a place for recreation.”²⁴

This heritage is reflected in the area’s historic hotels, including the Alpine Haus Bed & Breakfast on the loop (c. 1885) and the Apple Valley Inn (1831), a short distance away in Glenwood.

More recent history includes the development of Vernon’s skiing industry, beginning in the 1960s. Also, from 1972 through the early 1980s, the Playboy Club at Great Gorge drew visitors to the area at the

site now occupied by the Legends hotel.

Country taverns have long played a role in local life as well. At the southern end of the byway, the corner of NJ 23 and CR 515 was home to the Lewis Hillside Villa (1927), which provided refreshment to early travelers to the Jersey highlands.²⁵ The building continued to function as a restaurant until recently. Dupont has compiled several tall tales from area taverns, along with other local folklore, in a volume prepared at the time of Vernon’s bicentennial.²⁶



Pumpkins at Heaven Hill Farm

²⁴Dupont, *Vernon 200: A Bicentennial History*, op cit.

²⁵Dupont, “Western Highlands Scenic Byway Cultural and Historic Resources,” op cit

²⁶Dupont, *Vernon 200: A Bicentennial History*, op cit.

Scenic Qualities

The byway's scenic character varies significantly as one travels along the route. Starting at the southern end, views are primarily of woodland, with deciduous forest, conifer plantations, cold running streams, and scattered wetlands interspersed with several small farms and meadows. This section of the byway is

“picturesque year round...Subtle grays of winter give way to lush shades of green with the new growth of spring. In summer, the over story forest can create various degrees of cooling shade over the road while fall typically ushers in a kaleidoscope of color from the maples, oaks, hickories and ash trees.”²⁹

After rising to a crest at the entrance to Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area, a dramatic vista opens up on the descent towards Vernon Valley, known as Sisco Hill.

After the descent from Sisco Hill and passing through Vernon Center, the spine begins to reveal striking farmland vistas. These

“...farmland and pastoral landscapes... shadowed by Wawayanda Mountain to the east and the lower Pochuck Mountain ridge to the distant west” offer “viewsheds of old time barns, scattered homesteads, grasslands, and corn fields.”³⁰

The loop provides a different visual character, with views of light industry, contemporary suburban landscapes, and resort properties along with some historic farms and barns. Among its memorable elements are occasional views of Vernon's



Sisco Hill

“On a clear day one can see the Great Valley in Orange County, New York, with two outlying mountains—Mount Adam and Mount Eve. Beyond, the Kittatinnyes become the Shawagunks, setting a backdrop that runs from northwest to northeast to the horizon. On exceptionally clear days, the horizon extends to Mount Wittenberg, Cornell, and Slide, which are the highest peaks in the Catskills at over 4,180 feet.”²⁷

The view from Sisco Hill has been noted since the 19th century. It was depicted in an engraving in the 1856 Geological Survey of New Jersey and in one of Robert L. Dickinson's pen-and-ink sketches for the New York Walk Book, as well as in postcards from the 1950s to the present.”²⁸

²⁷Miranda, op. cit.

²⁸Dupont, “Western Highlands Scenic Byway,” op cit.

²⁹Miranda, op. cit.

³⁰Miranda, op cit.

church steeples from different angles, open fields, limestone formations, and the ski runs on Hamburg Mountain, which make an especially striking view when lit up on winter nights.

Perhaps the most dramatic view on the entire byway is the Pinwheel Vista, which cannot be seen from the roadway but requires a hike. It provides a view of the Kittatinny Ridge toward the Delaware Water Gap. The Pinwheel Vista can be reached from the Appalachian Trail trailhead on NJ 94.

Visual Survey

A visual survey of the byway was completed in July 2017 by a professional landscape architect and community volunteers, in accordance with the guidelines of the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program. The route was divided into segments, and participants

rated the visual quality of each segment and recorded their observations about positive and negative elements. The most positively rated segments were those with farmland vistas, while negatively rated segments included detractors such as utilities, large parking lots, and billboards. The survey results are presented in Appendix A.

Corridor Fixtures Inventory

The study team also conducted a detailed inventory of fixtures that affect the byway's scenic quality, such as commercial signs and billboards, utility towers, power lines, solar panels, and parking lots. The diagram in Appendix C illustrates the findings of the inventory. Options for reducing the visual impact of some of these features are spelled out in Chapter 6.



Pinwheel Vista (Courtesy of Eleanor Bortnick)



4 Transportation Assessment

The byway is made up of one state highway, NJ 94, and three county roads: CR 515, CR 517, and CR 644. These roads serve local and regional transportation in Vernon and Hardyston and provide connections to points beyond, including commuting, leisure travel, and freight shipments throughout Sussex County and between New Jersey and New York State. This chapter examines the characteristics and usage of these roadways to assess what steps may be needed to accommodate byway users in the context of other transportation functions. It includes a high-level review of safety data to identify issues or locations that may warrant further study.

Roadway Characteristics

The table below shows the basic characteristics of each byway road.

Roadway	Functional Class	Speed limit	Average Annual Daily Traffic	Number of Lanes	Pavement width	Shoulder width
NJ 94 (spine)	Rural minor arterial	45 mph	8,336 (2013)	2	24'	3'
NJ 94 (loop portion)	Urban minor arterial	35-40 mph	11,668 (2013)	2	24'	3-10'
CR 515	Rural minor arterial	45-50 mph	7,283 (2014)	2	22'	2'
CR 517	Urban collector	35-40 mph	4,204 (2012)	2	22'	2'
CR 644	Urban collector	35-40 mph	7,416 (2014)	2	26'	4'

Source: NJDOT Straight Line Diagrams, 2015

Traffic Volumes

Traffic is highest on the loop portion of NJ 94, at close to 12,000 average daily vehicles (as of the most recent data from 2013). It is lowest on CR 517, at approximately 4,000 average daily vehicles. Byway stakeholders report periods of high congestion on the spine during special events in Warwick, NY as well as on the loop portion of NJ 94 during peak periods of activity at Mountain Creek Resort. During those times, congestion may pose an obstacle to visitors seeking to tour the byway.

Traffic Speeds

Speed limits range from 45-50 mph on the byway spine and from 35-40 mph on the loop. These speeds can present a challenge for slower moving leisure travelers, who may be unfamiliar with the area and want to enjoy the views or search for byway destinations. This issue is most pronounced on the southern end of CR 515, where there are very few places to pull over. A strategy to help address the speed disparity between leisure travelers and commuters would be to create pull-off areas where visitors can pull over temporarily and/or park briefly to take in their surroundings, consult a map, etc. On CR 515 there are several existing, unimproved pull-off areas that may be suitable for development as byway pull-offs.

Roadway Usage

A byway serves not only motorists, but other modes of transportation. These may include bicyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, and farm vehicles, as well as truck traffic and tour buses. Trucks and tour buses are currently permitted and accommodated on all of the byway roads, as are occasional farm vehicles. However, the speeds and narrow shoulders

on most of the roads make bicycling and equestrian usage difficult.

Bicyclists

A Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis was performed for the byway roads. The LTS evaluates the degree of comfort a bicyclist is likely to experience on a facility according to four levels of stress:

- **Level of Traffic Stress 1:** The level most users can tolerate (including children and seniors)
- **Level of Traffic Stress 2:** The level tolerated by most adults
- **Level of Traffic Stress 3:** The level tolerated by enthusiastic riders, who might still prefer dedicated space
- **Level of Traffic Stress 4:** The level tolerated by the most experienced riders

Lower stress facilities have more separation between cyclists and vehicular traffic and/or lower speeds and lower traffic volumes. Higher stress environments generally involve cyclists riding in proximity to traffic, higher speeds or traffic volumes, or multi-lane roadways. Due to the relatively high speeds and limited separation between cyclists and vehicles, all segments of the byway were assessed at LTS 4, a level suitable only for the most experienced riders. Moreover, limited right-of-way width restricts the potential to add bicycle lanes along most of the byway.

As an alternative to encouraging cycling on byway roads, a suggested approach is to identify other opportunities for cycling in or near the byway corridor and provide access points and information to byway visitors about these opportunities. This could include providing connections between

the byway and the greenway/trail system under development in Vernon Township, providing suggested touring routes on lower-speed roads, and information on bicycling opportunities in Wawayanda State Park.

Pedestrians

There are limited pedestrian facilities on the byway itself, apart from sidewalks in portions of Vernon Center. Other than in Vernon Center, the chief opportunities for walking near the byway are on the Appalachian Trail and small trails such as the Black Creek Trail and Canal Trail.

The Appalachian Trail crosses the byway at NJ 94 (milepost 43.9). An estimated 1,900 through-hikers cross at this spot each year, along with thousands of day-hikers. Currently there are no markings or signs to indicate this crossing to motorists. An improved pedestrian crossing is recommended at this location.

Improvements to pedestrian connectivity within Vernon Center are also recommended, as envisioned in the Town Center redevelopment plan. In developing the Town Center and its pedestrian facilities, consideration should be given to improving the pedestrian linkages among historic sites and other destinations of interest to byway visitors, such as places to eat or shop. Over time, other pedestrian nodes and walking tours might be developed along the byway, such as in McAfee.

Public Transit

Public transit service is very limited in the byway vicinity. NJ Transit operates two commuter bus routes in the area with service to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New

York, bus #194 and #196/197/198. Bus #194 serves Hardyston at the park-and-ride located at St. John Vianney Church on NJ 23 southbound, about a mile and half northwest of the byway's southern entrance. There are currently five morning departures from this stop on weekdays and nine evening return trips from New York, but no weekend service to the Hardyston stop. Limited weekend service is provided to the West Milford stop east of the byway. Bus #196/197/198 serves Warwick, NY with more departures than #194 and weekend service. A commuter bus formerly stopped near the intersection of NJ 23 and CR 515, and an effort is currently underway to investigate restoring bus service to the Vernon area. Other ideas that have been put forward include a shuttle service with connections to a nearby transit hub (potentially serving the NJ Transit Warwick stop) and a hiker shuttle to provide better connectivity between the Appalachian Trail and Vernon Center. A hiker shuttle could



Hikers crossing NJ 94

also help address the trail parking shortage. There may be opportunities for a new type of hiker shuttle using an Uber-style ride-hailing service.

Trucks

Limited information is available on the volume of trucks on the byway. Data is available for a location on NJ 94 approximately three miles west of the byway. At this location, trucks account for 5.7% of annual average daily traffic, representing an average of 377 trucks per day. A weight restriction for trucks is posted at the entrance to CR 515.

Safety

The study team conducted a high-level safety assessment of the byway roads based on crash data for 2014-2016. The data was obtained from the NJDOT Safety Voyager system. During this three-year period, a total of 507 vehicular crashes were recorded on byway roads. On most segments of the byway, crash rates (measured per million vehicle miles traveled) were below the statewide rate for similar roadways. However, three out of fourteen road segments had crash rates exceeding the corresponding statewide rates:

- CR 515 from MP 8.32-8.55 (in Vernon Center, between Main Street and the NJ 94 intersection);
- CR 517 from MP 46.84-48.46 (between McPeck Road and NJ 94), and
- NJ 94 from 40.16-40.62 (between Sand Hill Road and Cumulus Road, a segment that includes the entrance to Mountain Creek).

Additionally, certain crash types were over-represented compared to statewide rates in portions of the byway. Both animal-related crashes and crashes involving fixed objects (such as utility poles or guiderail) were over-represented on almost the entire byway. The study team reviewed the locations of selected crash types to identify potential clusters or patterns. These included fixed object, overturned, and left-turn crashes, as well as all night-time crashes. Based on this data, several locations were identified for further investigation to see whether any correctible physical features or lack of illumination may be contributing to elevated crash rates. These locations include CR 515 in Hardyston, CR 515 just south of Vernon Center, the intersection of NJ 94 and CR 517, and the intersection of CR 644 and CR 517. All of these locations had clusters of night-time crashes and fixed object crashes.



Safety message sign near Vernon Township entrance





5 Land Use and Development Along the Byway

The character of the byway is heavily shaped by its surroundings, in particular existing patterns of land use and development. The extensive preserved lands along the byway ensure that most portions are not susceptible to the kinds of change that would affect the byway's character. However, several areas are designated for redevelopment, which could bring a change to the visual character and affect the visitor's experience of the byway either positively or negatively. This chapter reviews the existing protections, current zoning, and potential redevelopment of the lands surrounding the byway.

Current Plans and Regulations

The study team reviewed the following documents to assess the status of plans and regulations governing land use along the byway:

- Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan, 2005
- Sussex County Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2003
- Sussex County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update, 2008
- Sussex County Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 2016
- Township of Vernon Master Plan Update, 2016
- Vernon Township Highlands Preservation Area Master Plan Element, 2013



- Township of Vernon Highlands Preservation Area Land Use Ordinance, 2014
- Hardyston Township Master Plan, 2003
- Township of Hardyston Highlands Preservation Area Master Plan Element, 2011
- Township of Hardyston Highlands Preservation Area Land Use Ordinance, 2011
- Highlands Regional Master Plan, 2008

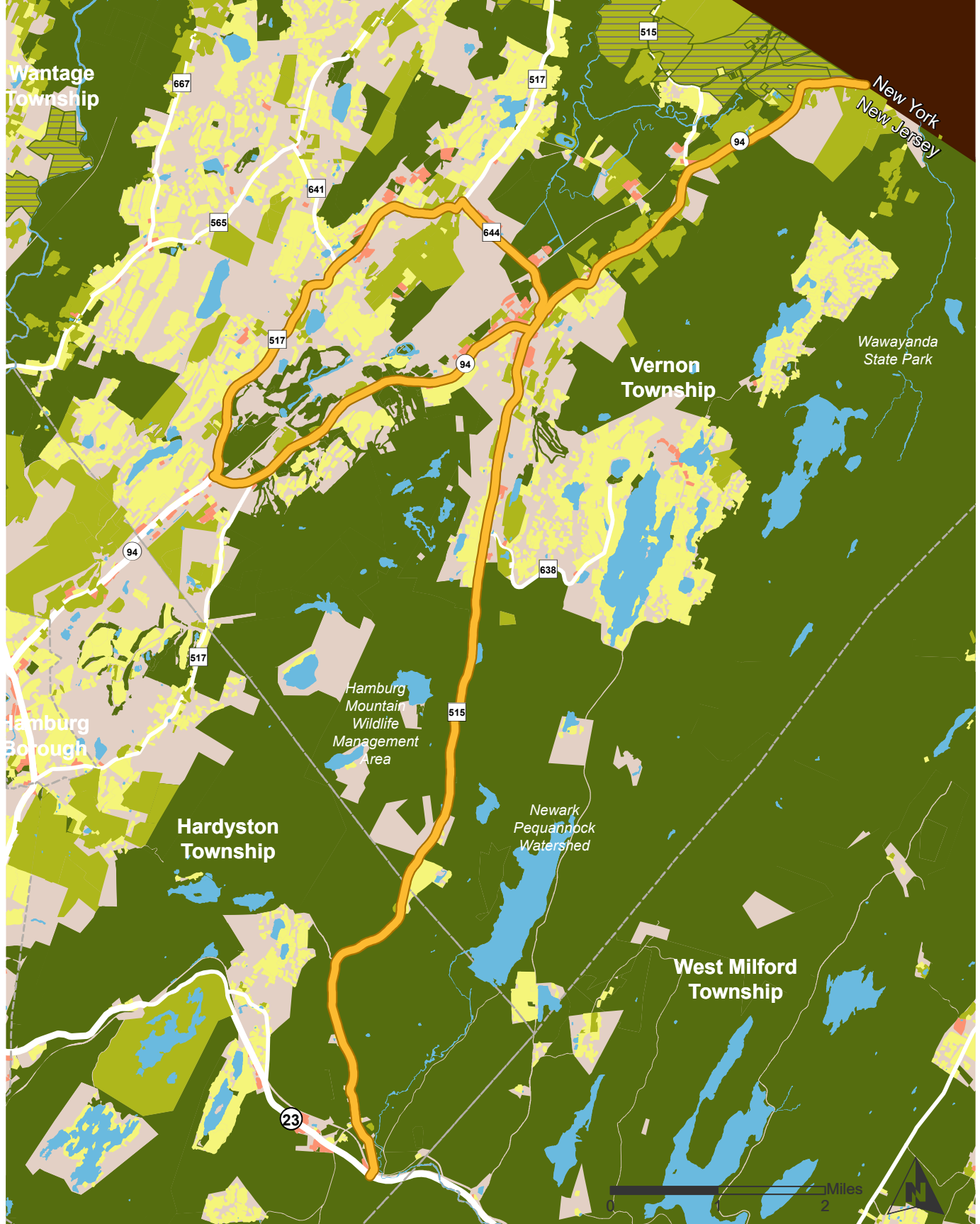
This review confirmed that most of the land along the byway is either in long term preservation or otherwise protected from adverse forms of development. Preserved lands include the Newark Pequannock Watershed, the Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Wawayanda State Park, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and preserved farmland. Figure 5-1 shows existing land use and preserved lands in the byway corridor.

An additional layer of protection is provided by the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004. The entire byway lies within the Highlands Region. As shown in Figure 5-2, most of the byway spine is in the Preservation Area, where development controls are most stringent. The byway loop is entirely in the Planning Area, which allows for development with restrictions.

Vernon Township Zoning Ordinance

In the areas that are not currently preserved, municipal master plans and zoning regulations control future development. Since the entire portion of the byway within Hardyston is preserved, only Vernon's ordinance is relevant to this assessment. An examination of zoning in Vernon indicates that it is generally consistent with the byway's character. Vernon's zoning map is included in Appendix D. Apart from Vernon Center and the medium density residential areas near the center, the lands along the byway spine are primarily zoned Conservation District (C) or Agri-Eco Tourism (AET); the latter designation includes the farmland between Vernon Center and the New York state line. Exceptions include two areas zoned Rural/Residential (R-1). On the loop, there is a mixture of zoning that largely reflects existing uses, including light industrial (LI), low density residential (R-2), commercial recreation (CR), and mountain resort (MR).

Vernon Township's Land Development ordinance includes comprehensive Design and Development Standards and Principles that will shape future development in those areas where it is permitted. The standards, contained in Article VII, call for designs that complement historic landmarks, preserve the natural environment and the visual elements of the built environment, protect working farms, and preserve the visual environment of farms



Legend

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Western Highlands Scenic Byway |  Farmland |  Residential |
|  Municipal Border |  NJ Farmland Preservation Program |  Other |
|  Parks, Open Space, and other Preserved Lands |  Commercial/Industrial |  Water |

Figure 5-1: Existing Land Use and Preserved Lands in the Byway Corridor

that are no longer active. Developments are to be designed to promote the preservation of historic sites, landmarks, and districts, and to prevent sprawl, including strip development. Section 330-87 of Article VII signals an intent to protect visual resources with the following purpose statement:

“This section is designed to protect Vernon’s remaining open spaces from conventional development patterns and measures which tend to compromise the intrinsic value of farmlands, fields, woodlands, mountain profiles or ridgelines, ridge faces, plateaus, and watercourses and water bodies (hereinafter “visual resource lands”).”

Concerning scenic vistas, Section 330-87 states that:

“Intense development of visual resource lands shall be prohibited. Only such development as is compatible with and respectful of the provisions and spirit of this section shall be permitted. Disturbed and improved lands shall, to the greatest practicable extent, be or remain predominately invisible from public ways and trails, including but not limited to the Appalachian Trail and the scenic corridors of the Township, such as but not limited to those in the AET districts.”

If applied consistently, the Design and Development Standards should help to preserve the byway’s character as development occurs.

Redevelopment Areas

Vernon Township has designated five redevelopment areas, all of which touch the byway. As shown in Figure 5-3, they include the Vernon Town Center Area, Mountain Creek Area, McAfee Village Area, McAfee Village Commercial Resort (Legends), and McAfee Village Highway Hotel (St. Frances). The redevelopment of the Town Center in accordance with the Township’s design standards has the potential to improve the byway’s appearance, as older strip shopping centers are redeveloped and streetscape elements are added. The future of the other designated areas is less certain. Proposals for the McAfee Village area have included a water park and hotel. A proposed sewer area expansion in this area could affect development plans. Proposals for the Legends property have included residential and mixed-use development, with the potential to improve the appearance of the site.



Vernon’s design standards encourage buildings that fit the local context

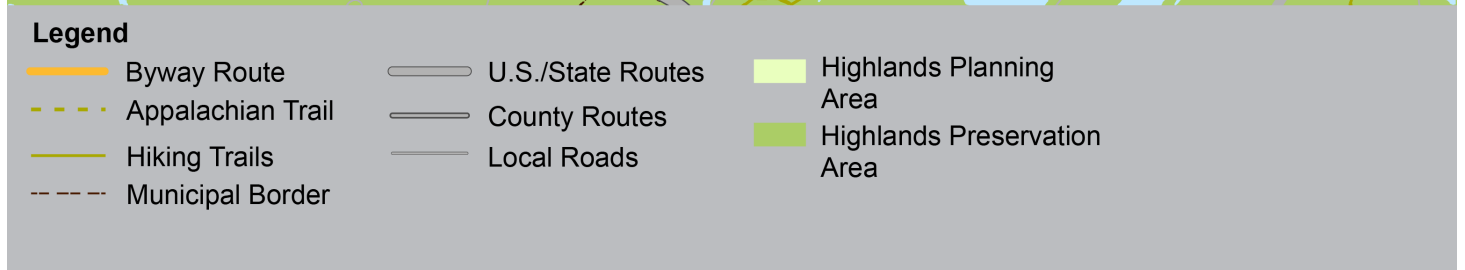
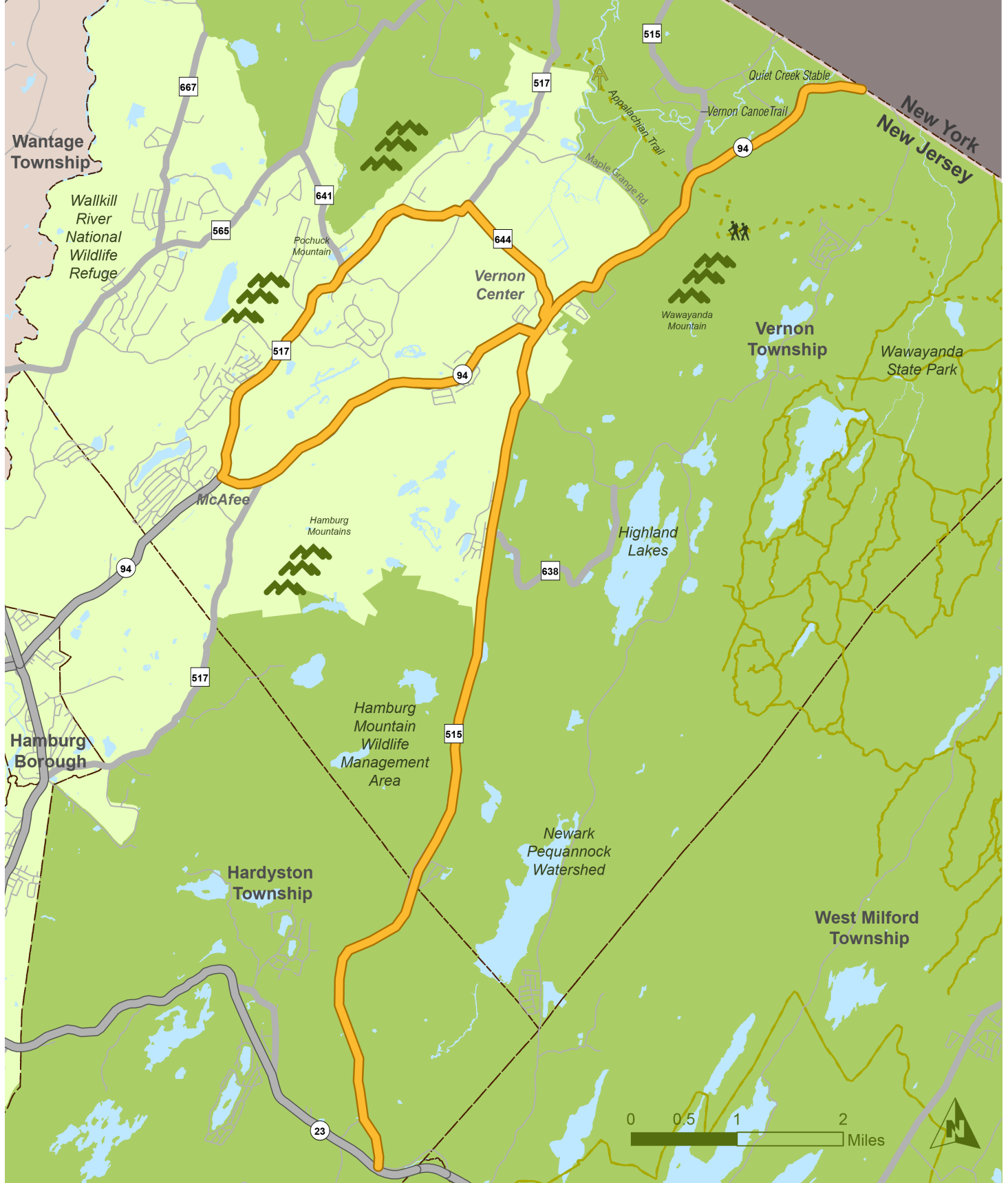


Figure 5-2: Highlands Preservation and Planning Areas

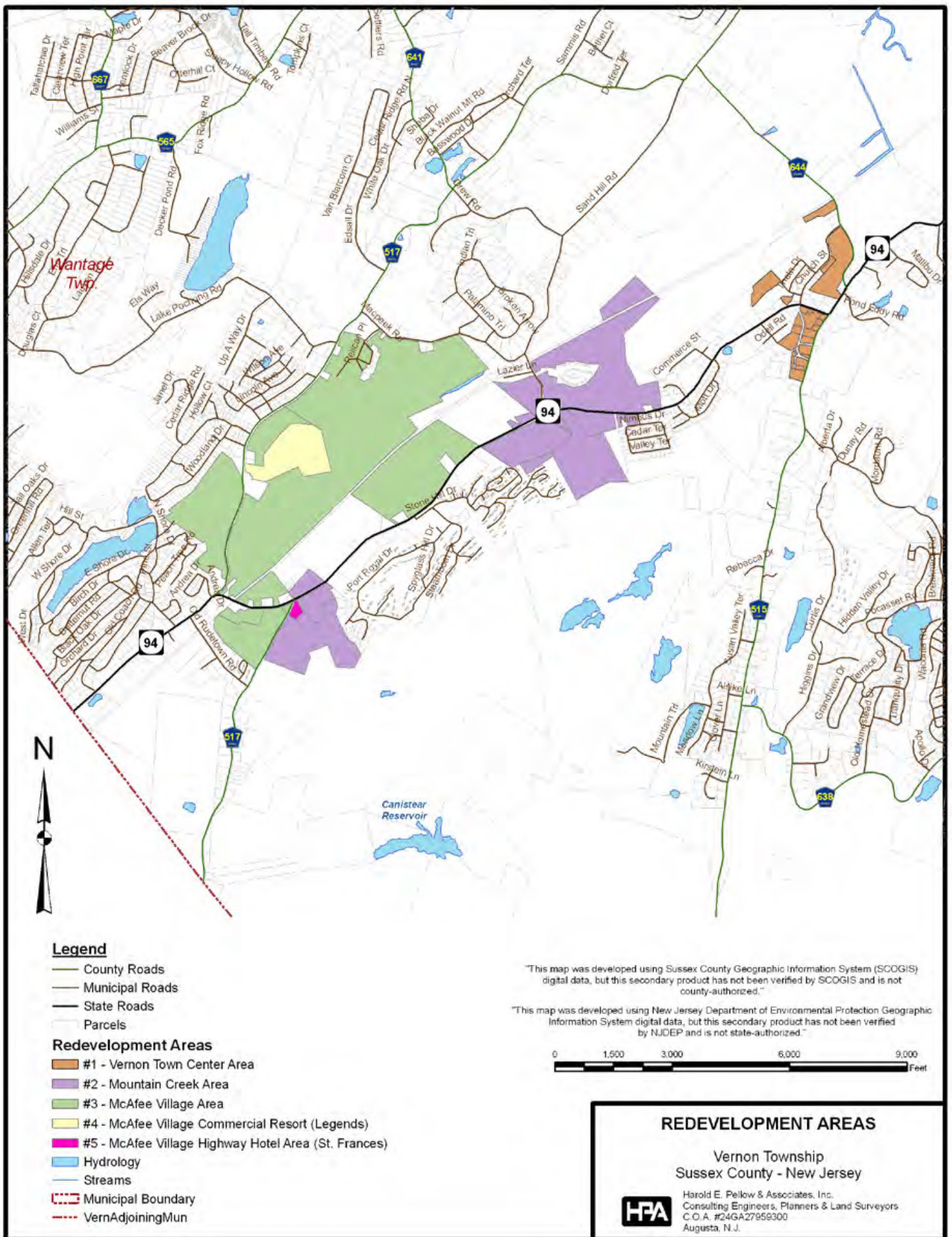


Figure 5-3: Vernon Redevelopment Areas

Source: Vernon Township Master Plan, updated 2016





6 Management Strategies

This chapter presents recommended strategies for maintaining the character of the byway and enhancing it over time, for the benefit of visitors and residents alike. The strategies are organized into the following categories: landscape conservation and enhancement, historic character, transportation and safety, and signing and navigation. Chapter 7 presents interpretive strategies and Chapter 8 presents tourism and marketing strategies. Together, these three chapters form the plan's recommendations.

Landscape Conservation and Enhancement

Landscape strategies include actions to preserve and enhance the byway's scenic quality.

A1: Reduce and avoid road sign clutter

The corridor fixtures and sign inventory conducted for this plan identified several intersections with an excessive number of road signs. Reviewing these locations and removing unnecessary signs would create a cleaner, streamlined look, as well as helping drivers attend to the key information they need at each intersection. For example, at the intersection of NJ 94 and CR 515, the number of signs can likely be reduced. To the extent possible, new byway signs should be located in a manner that avoids adding to sign clutter.

A2: Enforce restrictions on off-premise advertising signs

Both Vernon and Hardyston Townships prohibit off-premise advertising signs, with exceptions for certain types of temporary signs by permit. A significant number of unauthorized lawn signs and placards currently detract from the visual quality of the byway. Stepped up enforcement by code officers would enhance the views.

A3: Add a prohibition on new billboards to local ordinances

State regulations prohibit the construction of new billboards on designated byways. Similar provisions in local ordinances help to reinforce this provision. Vernon’s zoning ordinance includes a general billboard prohibition. It is recommended that Hardyston Township adopt an ordinance prohibiting new billboards along the byway.

A4: Consider repurposing an existing billboard for an attractive byway display

Since existing billboards are “grandfathered,” they often continue to detract from a byway’s visual quality. Other byways have addressed this issue by purchasing and removing those billboards with the greatest impact on scenic views. An alternative that has been suggested for the Western Highlands is to purchase or lease an existing billboard, but instead of removing it, use the space for an artistic display that complements the view from the road and serves to promote the byway. This option may prove costly, but is worth investigating.

A5: Control roadside litter

A comment heard at the first public meeting for this plan was the need to reduce litter on byway roads. While the study team has not observed a significant litter problem, conditions should be monitored. If necessary, additional civic organizations might be recruited to help with litter removal through Vernon’s ongoing participation in the NJ Clean Communities Program.



Reducing the number of signs at certain locations would benefit drivers and enhance the appearance of the byway



Unauthorized advertizing signs detract from the visual quality of the byway

A6: Use landscaping to screen chief visual detractors

The Visual Survey conducted for this plan, as well as the corridor fixtures inventory, identified several locations along the byway where adjacent uses detract from the byway's appearance. Examples include large parking lots on the loop (such as a vehicle storage lot on NJ 94 near Mountain Creek) and an electrical sub-station on CR 515. Landscaping treatments could be used to screen some of these uses from view or lessen their visual impact. Incentives would likely be needed to encourage property owners to undertake landscape treatments. In the case of some of the older commercial parking lots in Vernon Center, landscape treatments would be incorporated by developers during future redevelopment projects, in accordance with Vernon Township's design and development standards.

A7: Employ roadside management to open views and vistas

As the byway traverses the Newark Pequannock Watershed, woodland views predominate on both sides of CR 515. Occasional glimpses of streams, wetlands, and meadows offer a welcome contrast. Selective tree trimming and/or removal to open some of these views would enhance the byway traveler's experience. For example, on the northbound side of CR 515 at milepost 5.35 there is a small pond where a beaver dam often can be seen; this is one spot where a more open view would add interest to the byway.

A8: Consider adding native wildflowers along the roadsides

During summer and early fall, existing wildflowers add color to the roadside. Consideration could be given to broadcasting additional native wildflowers for heightened impact. If pursued, this would need to be coordinated with roadside mowing practices.

A9: Promote the health of trees along the byway and assess the extent of invasive species

During the Visual Inventory conducted for the plan, the presence of invasive species was noted in several locations, including on the northbound side of Vernon Crossing Rd. (CR 644) and the northbound side of CR 517 (south of the McPeck Road intersection). An assessment by an arborist is recommended to determine whether invasive species pose a threat to the health of trees visible from the byway. If so, an action plan could be developed to address the most significant threats. Removing invasive species in strategic locations could also help improve roadside views. Vernon could also explore the option of becoming a Tree City USA, a national movement that helps communities manage and expand their public trees. There are currently 159 communities in New Jersey with the Tree City USA designation.

A10: Improve the appearance of the road divider approaching Vernon Center

The concrete divider on CR 515 has a worn appearance that reduces the visual appeal of this section of the byway. Moreover, its location approaching Vernon's commercial center calls for a more attractive gateway treatment. County officials are willing to allow the use of an alternative



material to improve the divider’s appearance; however, they have indicated that this initiative and its cost would be the responsibility of Vernon Township. Materials that might be considered include Belgian block or granite pavers. An updated, more distinctive gateway treatment and new signage could also be considered. This type of project is potentially eligible for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant under the “community improvement activities” category for streetscaping and corridor landscaping. The program is competitive and requires a 20 percent match.

A11: Support future streetscape improvements in Vernon Town Center

Vernon is planning to redevelop its core commercial area to form a Town Center with mixed-use development at a pedestrian-friendly scale. New streetscaping and pedestrian-scale design features would complement the byway by improving the appearance of the commercial core, calming traffic, and providing an attractive location for visitors to explore on foot. Public art and benches along the street could also be considered.

A12: Conduct visual assessment of CR 517 between CR 644 and McPeek Road

The byway loop route was modified during the development of this plan, after detailed visual assessments were completed. Consequently, the visual character of the new segment of CR 517 between CR 644 and McPeek Road has not been inventoried in detail. A visual assessment of this segment is recommended to identify the potential need for enhancements. This assessment could be carried out by volunteers, using the same approach as for the Visual Survey conducted for this plan.

Historic Character of the Roadside

Closely related to the visual quality of the byway is the historic character of the roadside, which provides much of the byway’s charm and significance. The following strategies are intended to help preserve that historic character and enhance the visitor’s experience of the historic landscape elements.

B1: Assess priorities for preservation or restoration of vulnerable historic structures and landscapes

The Vernon Township Historical Society has conducted research on a variety of significant historic buildings in Vernon, including properties along the byway. However, there is a need to determine which of the buildings or farmsteads currently contributing to the byway’s historic character are vulnerable to decay, demolition, or incompatible re-uses. While many of these assets are not eligible for landmark status, they are still important to the appearance of the byway. Examples include old barns, homesteads, and farm fields.

Most of Vernon’s farms are protected against subdivision or conversion to non-farm uses. However, there are still potential threats to the historic look of the byway, such as the installation

of solar arrays or construction of modern buildings on farm properties. Incentives or grants that encourage property owners to repair or restore appealing older structures could help to maintain the byway's character. Special permits may soon be available from the State Agriculture Development Committee allowing micro-enterprises on preserved farmland; new rules enacted in June 2018 provide incentives for "repurposing obsolete or underutilized farm structures that are important elements of the state's agricultural history and rural landscape." In the case of solar arrays, an ordinance could be considered requiring them to be placed out of view from the roadway. A recommended first step is a study to identify those structures and landscapes most at risk and identify potential measures to encourage their preservation or restoration.

B2: Investigate the feasibility of restoring historic stone walls

Where present, old stone walls (or technically, stone fences) along farm properties contribute significantly to the historic character of the byway. In the farmland corridor on NJ 94, there is evidence of original stone walls that have been covered up with soil and vegetation over time. Restoring or recreating some of these stone walls would be a way of enhancing the historic appearance of the landscape. The feasibility and cost of restoring stone walls may depend on whether they are located on state or private land, how deeply buried the stones are, and whether soil erosion could result from uncovering them. A feasibility study is recommended to assess these issues and if possible, identify a pilot restoration project to be undertaken with a willing property owner. The County Sheriff's program may be a resource to perform the work for the pilot project.



Stone walls contribute to the historic character of the roadside

B3: Evaluate potential for aesthetic improvements at entrance to Stockholm United Methodist Church

The Stockholm United Methodist Church is the only site located directly on the byway that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also one of the few buildings remaining from the original village of Stockholm, and is the first logical “stop” for a visitor entering the byway from the south. However, the church is on a hill set back from CR 515 and is not visible from the roadway; only the entrance area can be seen from the road. The entrance area consists of an asphalt parking lot, a low-rise brick office building and signboard, and it is separated from the roadway by a piece of steel guiderail. Aesthetic improvements to this entrance area would complement the historic appearance of the church. For example, if the guiderail is required for safety reasons, an alternative material such as steel-backed timber could be considered. If guiderail is not necessary, a decorative fence could be considered instead. Adding an attractive historic marker or interpretive panel on the history of the church, as discussed in the next chapter, would also help to create a more distinctive appearance at the church entrance.

B4: Encourage compatible redevelopment of Vernon Township redevelopment areas, consistent with byway character

Vernon Township has designated five redevelopment areas, all of which touch the byway: the Vernon Town Center Area, Mountain Creek Area, McAfee Village Area, McAfee Village Commercial Resort (Legends), and McAfee Village Highway Hotel (St. Frances). The redevelopment of each of these areas has the potential to improve the appearance of the byway by upgrading obsolete land uses and site designs. New uses in these areas could also expand the recreational opportunities available to byway visitors. The Township has established comprehensive Design and Development Standards and Principles for future development. The standards call for designs that preserve and complement historic landmarks, preserve the natural environment, and prevent strip development and sprawl. The Vernon Land Use Board is encouraged to review redevelopment proposals and site plans for consistency with these standards, with an eye to promoting development that is consistent with the byway’s historic rural character.

B5: Encourage context-sensitive treatments for future road and bridge projects along the byway

As maintenance and repair projects are planned on the byway’s roads, NJDOT and Sussex County are encouraged to consider the use of context-sensitive design treatments where feasible. For example, from time to time it may be necessary to update or modify small bridges on byway roads. Consideration should be given to the use of historically sensitive designs and aesthetically pleasing materials for these bridge projects. To the extent feasible, road projects that are undertaken in response to future redevelopment should preserve the existing natural terrain and scenic landscapes.

B6: Investigate the potential for an Historic Farming District in Vernon Township

The formation of an Historic Farming District in Vernon would help reinforce existing policies that serve to protect the historic character of the byway, celebrate and provide more visibility for the historic significance of farming in Vernon, and establish a basis for potential future funding of improvements and interpretive measures. The Historic Farming District could be located along the NJ 94 corridor from Maple Grange Road to the New York State Line, and might also include High Breeze Farm.

B7: Maintain a strong farming presence

Maintaining active farming is one of the best ways to preserve the existing character of the byway and attract agri-tourism. Agricultural support programs are available to assist farmers with funding and technical assistance. Examples include the US Department of Agriculture's Value-Added Producer Grants and other programs overseen by the USDA's New Jersey Rural Development Office. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture also provides technical assistance for established farmers and persons seeking to become farmers.

Transportation and Safety

Several strategies are recommended to improve mobility and enhance safety on the byway.

C1: Investigate the potential to develop pull-off areas along CR 515

The southern portion of the byway on CR 515 is a narrow, winding, high-speed road that serves as a commuter route. These conditions, and the lack of places to stop, create a challenging environment for visitors attempting to appreciate their surroundings during the drive. Establishing small, signed pull-off areas in each direction would enhance safety by allowing slower-moving visitors to pull over temporarily and others to pass. Stopping at these pull-offs would also provide "breathing room" for visitors and a chance to consult a map, attend to children, or take in woodland scenery. There are several existing, unimproved pull-off areas that may be suitable for development as pull-offs. Field investigation is a recommended first step to determine feasibility and identify potential locations for pull-off areas.

C2: Investigate and develop pedestrian crossing improvements at Appalachian Trail crossing of NJ 94

The Appalachian Trail crosses the byway at NJ 94, milepost 43.9. An estimated 1,900 through-hikers cross at this spot each year, along with thousands of day-hikers. Currently there are no markings or signs to indicate this crossing to motorists. It is recommended that NJDOT investigate and implement a pedestrian crossing improvement at this location, such as a marked crosswalk, trail crossing signs and advance warning signs as illustrated in Figure 6-1. Another option would be to install a Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB), which pedestrians would activate with a pushbutton. The RRFB is being used at other locations in New Jersey to increase the visibility of unsignalized trail crossings as shown on the next page.





Trail crossing with Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (Lawrenceville NJ)

C3: Investigate the feasibility of expanding Appalachian Trail parking at or near NJ 94 and the possible creation of a scenic overlook

The existing trail parking area at NJ 94 is too small to accommodate peak demand, leading to unauthorized parking along the road. If the capacity of the parking area could be expanded, more byway users would be able to stop safely and explore the unique resources at this location, including the Stairway to Heaven and the Pinwheel Vista. This would also be an advantageous location for an information kiosk with interpretive displays about the Appalachian Trail and area wildlife, which could potentially be incorporated into the design of a larger parking area. This initiative could potentially be combined with the creation of a new scenic overlook if the additional parking were to be placed on higher land nearby. This strategy would require further investigation by NJDEP, Wawayanda State Park, and possibly the involvement of the National Park Service, depending on the specific location.

C4: Support pedestrian mobility improvements in Vernon Town Center

Vernon Center is an important resource for byway visitors, both as a location for obtaining basic needs and as one of the few places along the byway that allows for a walking tour of historic sites. Improving pedestrian mobility within the center, as is envisioned in the Town Center redevelopment plan, will benefit byway visitors as well as residents. Consideration should be given to improving the pedestrian linkages among existing historic sites, which might then be incorporated into a walking tour. More broadly, consideration could be given to the adoption of a Complete Streets policy or approach for the Town Center. Technical assistance for Complete Streets policy development and implementation is available from NJDOT, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, and Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers.

C5: Provide connections to future greenways and trails

Vernon Township is working to develop a network of multi-use trails. One or more connections should be developed between the byway and trail system, to allow byway visitors to park and take a hike or bike ride on the trails as part of their byway tour.

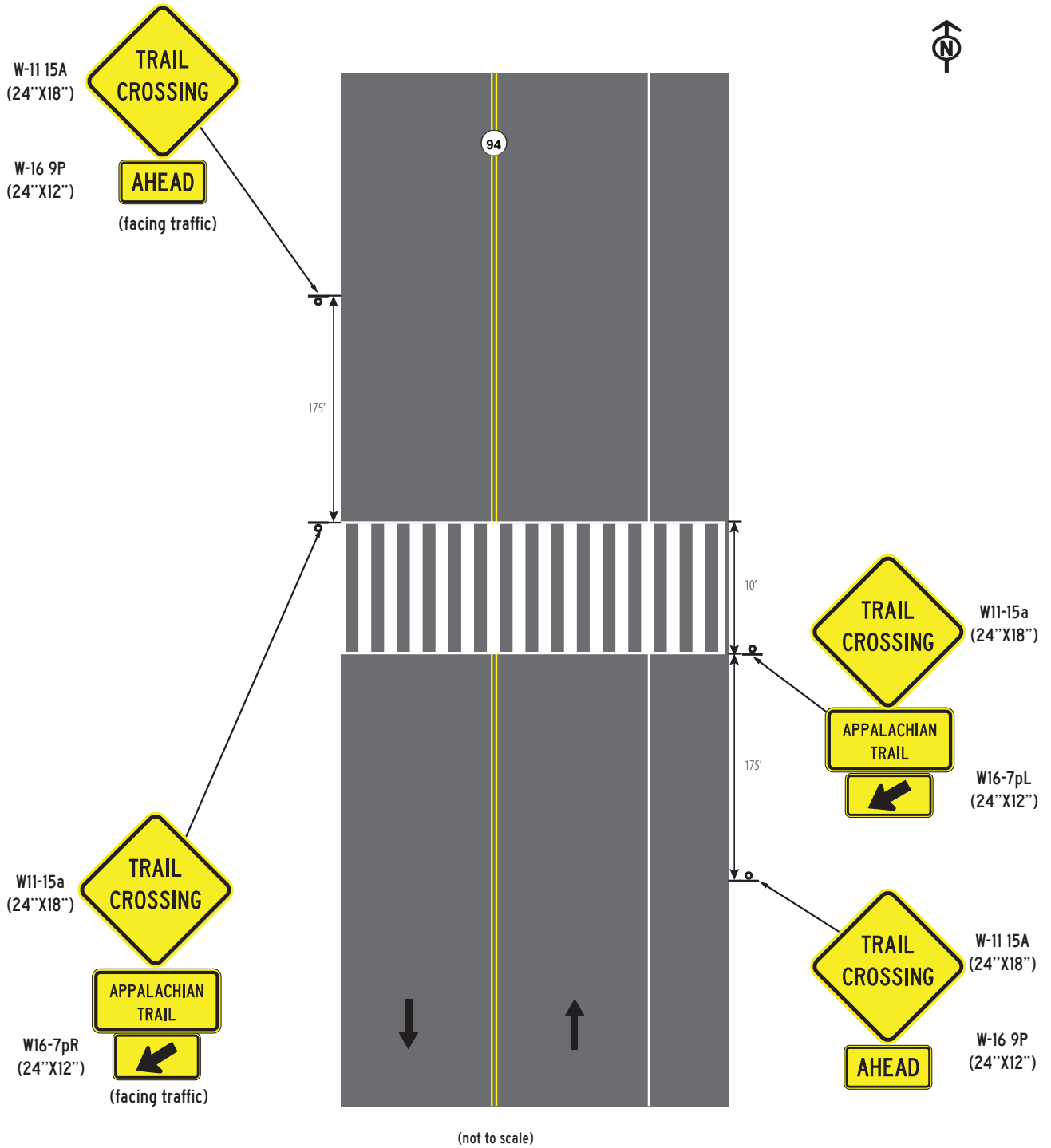


Figure 6-1: Potential Concept for Appalachian Trail Crossing of Route 94, MP 43.9

C6: Provide pedestrian and bicycle access to selected byway points of interest, where feasible

Beyond Vernon Center and connections to the trail network, there may be other locations along the byway where pedestrian and/or bicycle access to points of interest could be provided, allowing for additional walking or biking tours. For example, it may be possible to create a walking tour of historic features in McAfee.

C7: Explore the potential for new transit connections

Improved public transit service would benefit area residents, byway tourists without cars (for example, young adults traveling to the area from New York or Philadelphia), and Appalachian Trail hikers seeking to access services in Vernon. Options may include adding a stop to an existing NJ Transit or private commuter bus route; providing a shuttle service to a nearby stop, such as one of the Warwick stops on NJ Transit bus #196/197/198; and/or establishing a hiker shuttle to provide better connectivity between the Appalachian Trail and Vernon Center. A hiker shuttle could also help to address the trail parking shortage. There may be opportunities for a new type of on-demand hiker shuttle using an Uber-style ride-hailing service.

C8: Investigate locations with higher crash rates

The crash analysis performed for this plan showed several locations with higher than average crash rates. These locations should be investigated to determine whether geometric features, roadside obstructions, lighting issues, or other factors may be contributing to the elevated crash rates. They include CR 515 in Hardyston, CR 515 just south of Vernon Center, the intersection of NJ 94 and CR 517, and the intersection of CR 644 and CR 517. If warranted, appropriate safety enhancements should be developed.

C8: Monitor crash data along the byway periodically

Crash data should be monitored every three years to identify trends and to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented counter-measures.

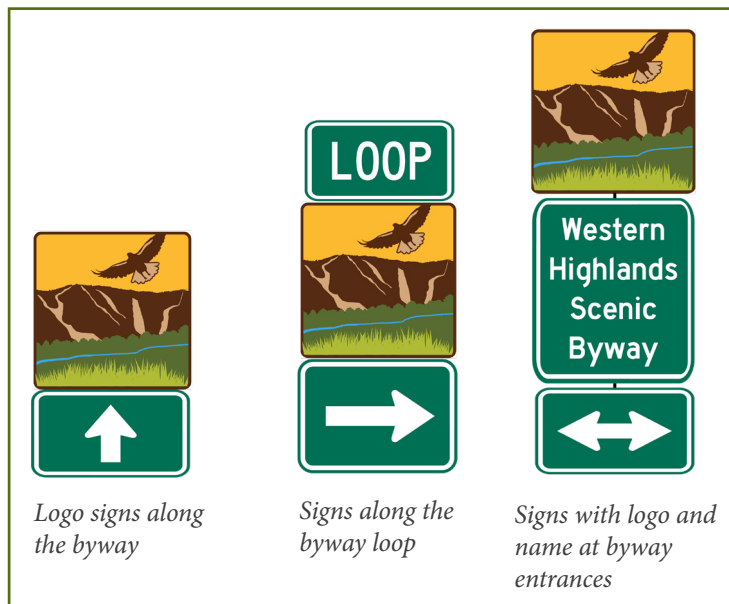
Byway Signing and Navigation

Byway signing is essential to help users successfully navigate and explore the byway. Related strategies include a touring map and narrative and other related sign systems.

D1: Install scenic byway signs in accordance with NJDOT guidelines

A companion plan to this document, the Sign Location Plan, identifies 14 locations for the installation of byway signs and provides specifications for sign installations. Figure 6-2 shows the proposed sign locations. Most of the locations are intersections, in which signs would be placed at each approach. In the past the initial signs have been fabricated and installed by NJDOT with agreements signed between NJDOT and the agencies with jurisdiction of the right of way to allow NJDOT to install the signs on their property and was contingent on available funding. As

per the NJ Scenic Byway Guidelines, initial sign fabrication is the responsibility of NJDOT and installation is the responsibility of the respective roadway owner.

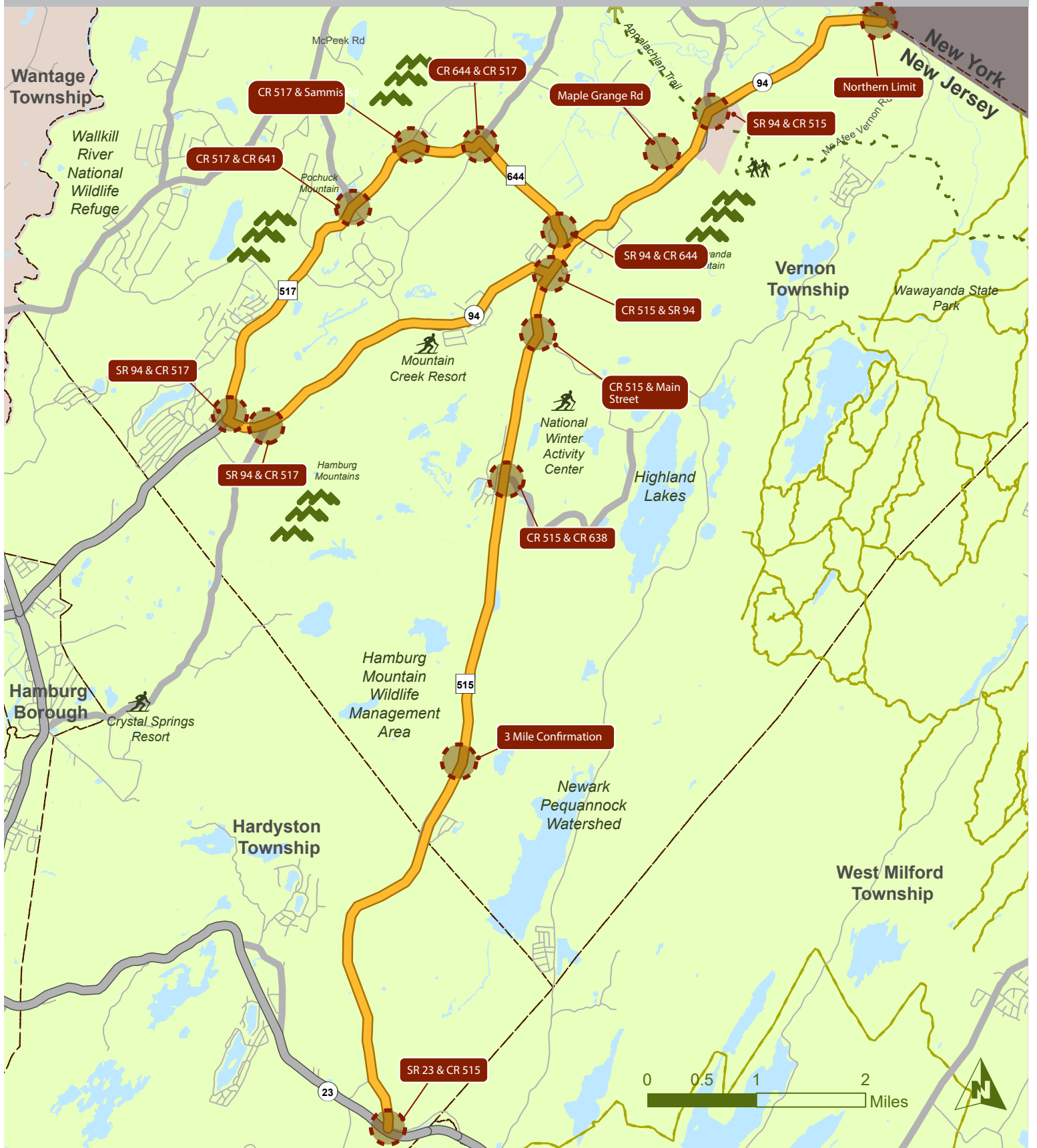


D2: Develop touring map and narrative with turn-by-turn directions

A touring map and narrative with turn-by-turn directions are recommended to supplement the byway signs on a Western Highlands Scenic Byway website. These materials will enable visitors to review the route in advance and determine where they will enter the byway. The map and directions should be developed for easy downloading and printing from the byway's website or with a link to the NJDOT website at <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/scenic/western.shtm>. A mobile app with real-time, GPS-enabled audio navigation is also recommended, as described in Chapter 7. A printed touring map is another option. These have proven popular on some of the other New Jersey byways. If a printed map is developed, it should follow the format used by the Delaware River Scenic Byway, Millstone Valley Scenic Byway, and Upper Freehold Scenic Byway to provide a consistent approach across the byways.

D3: Explore opportunities for related sign systems

Existing sign systems on the byway include historical markers at several landmarks and a limited number of wayfinding signs for destinations such as Mountain Creek and Wawayanda State Park. Consideration could be given to developing a more comprehensive and unified sign program focused on the wayfinding needs of first-time visitors. This effort could include exploring the potential for a supplemental sign or banner system for Vernon Center. Supplemental signs or banners could incorporate the byway logo or its colors, but would not substitute for byway signs.



Legend

- Byway Route
- Appalachian Trail
- Hiking Trails
- Municipal Border
- U.S./State Routes
- County Routes
- Local Roads
- Proposed Sign Locations

Figure 6-2: Proposed Byway Sign Locations

Other Management Strategies

E1: Clear streams to expand opportunities for canoeing and kayaking

This strategy would expand recreational opportunities close to the byway.

E2: Encourage special events such as outdoor concerts, movie showings, and performing arts

Special events such as outdoor entertainment could be offered during the summer to provide a wider array of experiences to visitors. Consideration could be given to building a band shell or amphitheater at Maple Grange Park, Veterans Memorial Park, or another location. Expanding outdoor seating and picnic areas in public places would also benefit visitors as well as residents.

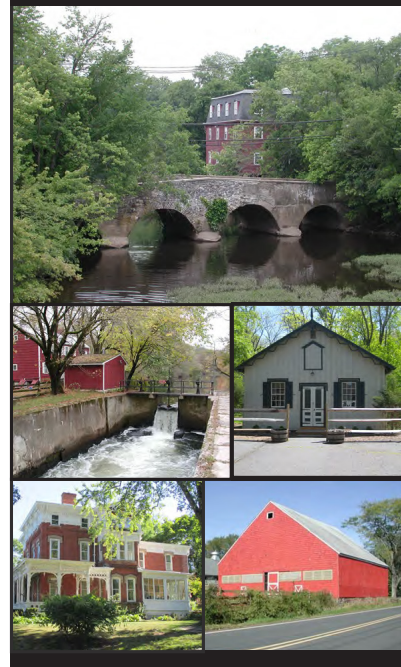
E3: Consider extension of byway into NY State and/or addition of side trips

A long-term strategy, once the byway is well-established, would be to consider extending the route into New York State. Consideration could also be given to adding side trips to nearby locations as part of byway materials.

E4: Adopt Corridor Management Plan as an element in local master plans

Amending the Vernon and Hardyston master plans to incorporate this Corridor Management Plan would help to reinforce its role in future decision-making.

Millstone Valley Scenic Byway



Touring map (cover), Millstone Valley Scenic Byway



MAIN STREET,
VERNON, N. J.

*NJ 94 in 1906, looking south towards Vernon Crossing Road. The highway likely follows a native American footpath. It served as a King's highway starting in 1735.
(Photo courtesy of Vernon Township Historical Society)*

7 Interpretive Strategies

One goal of this plan is to increase awareness of the region's history and significance through interpretive and educational programs for varied audiences. Much relevant work has already been done by the Vernon Township Historical Society to develop interpretive programs featuring the area's history and archaeology, providing a foundation for future efforts. This chapter describes the chief interpretive themes recommended for the byway, the programs and resources already in place, and recommended strategies for expanding them.

Interpretive Themes

The byway presents a variety of potential themes for interpretive materials and programs. Priorities for interpretation include the following themes discussed in Chapter 3:

- Farming, village life and rural industry, with a focus on the 18th and 19th centuries
- Early 20th century conservation history, including the formation of the Newark Pequannock Watershed and the Appalachian Trail
- Wildlife habitats of the byway and the importance of biodiversity (closely related to the conservation theme)
- Lenape culture from the Early Archaic Period to the Late Woodland Contact Period (8,000 BC to 1700 AD), as reflected in the Black Creek Site

Additional themes that could be developed include:

- The pre-Revolutionary War period and the King's Highway along NJ 94, as well as the role of the byway corridor in the Revolutionary War
- Geologic history and paleontology, including the Ice Age, the formation of Vernon Valley, and the discovery of the Mastodon
- The evolving culture of recreation and leisure travel in the corridor, a theme incorporating early hotels, taverns, and resorts, and the Appalachian Trail. This theme could include hiking stories from trail users who have stopped in Vernon over the years, along with tavern legends compiled by Dupont.³¹ It could also encompass the byway's scenic highlights enjoyed by earlier travelers, including the Pinwheel Vista and Sisco Hill, both the subject of various artists' interpretations.

Existing Interpretive Programs and Resources

The following are among the existing interpretive programs sponsored by the Vernon Township Historical Society and its partners:

- A third-grade curriculum unit on the Revolutionary War in Vernon
- A middle school curriculum on the Lenape Indians for Vernon Township schools entitled "Bringing the Past to the Present: Teaching about the Lenape Indians through the Black Creek Site." The curriculum was developed in 2008 through a partnership with eighth grade teachers and students at Glen Meadow Middle School, with a grant from the History Channel's "Save Our History" community preservation grant program.
- Hands on History Camp, a week-long summer program at Price's Switch Schoolhouse featuring life in Vernon in 1900. The camp has explored different themes, such as farming methods.



Hands-on history camp - 2014

³¹ Ronald J. Dupont, Jr., *Vernon 200: A Bicentennial History of the Township of Vernon, New Jersey, 1792-1992*, General Press, Highland Lakes, 1994

- Those Were the Days, a presentation offered on various historic topics, sometimes in period costume
- Voices of Vernon Past – a day-long event at a local cemetery in which people dress up as notable characters who are interred there (formerly an annual event in early October)
- Occasional Revolutionary War reenactments of General Washington and his troops coming through Vernon
- Lenape Pow-Wows held at the Black Creek Site with Lenape representatives (to be incorporated into the History and Archaeology Fair below)
- A History and Archaeology Fair held each year at Maple Grange Park, in which an archaeologist from the organization Lenape Lifeways conducts a walking tour and interprets the Black Creek Site. This event has drawn as many as 5,000 participants.

Additional interpretive materials include a print brochure on the Black Creek Site and extensive information and images on the Historical Society’s website. An interpretive panel is in place at the Black Creek site, and the Historical Society is currently preparing a series of interpretive panels to be installed along the Black Creek Trail. Historical markers are also in place at a number of sites in the byway corridor, including markers for Snufftown-Stockholm village, Cedar Crest Farm, the Denton-Wallace Homestead, Mastodon Lake, Price’s Switch Schoolhouse, High Breeze Farm, and the Black Creek Site. The markers are provided by Sussex County.

The Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council conducts an annual Heritage Weekend featuring locations throughout the county in October. In 2017, the Western Highlands Scenic Byway was among the featured destinations.

Recommended Strategies

Recommended interpretive strategies would build on existing programs and resources. They include developing wayside interpretive information at strategic locations along the byway, creating a mobile app, a virtual tour, and historic visualizations, and identifying one or more historic sites that can be opened to visitors on a scheduled basis. In the long term, consideration could be given to establishing a museum or visitor's center.

F1: Develop wayside kiosks and interpretive panels at strategic locations

Many of the most interesting elements of the byway are either invisible or not readily apparent to the casual visitor. A key recommendation is to develop a set of wayside kiosks and interpretive panels that can help visitors appreciate the hidden features of the byway. The locations and specific themes for these kiosks or panels will need to be developed in conjunction with plans for pull-off areas and proposed tourist itineraries along the byway. Interpretive panels should be designed according to the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program Guidelines for the Development of Scenic Byways Signage.



NJ Scenic Byways Program guidelines include interpretive signs in two sizes

Potential locations and themes along the byway spine include the following, from south to north:

- An orientation area with a welcome kiosk at the southern entrance, ideally in a corner of the vacant park-and-ride lot at NJ 23 and CR 515. A kiosk at this location would provide an overview and map of the entire byway, and could include the history of the railroad and tavern at this location. This concept would require approval from Hardyston and the City of Newark (the property owner), and might involve a lease agreement with Newark.
- An interpretive panel at Stockholm United Methodist Church (if allowed by the church). This property is one of the few remaining structures from historic Stockholm, and the only property directly on the byway that is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This panel could describe the history of the church and of Snufftown-Stockholm and introduce information on the formation of Newark Pequannock Watershed.

- An interpretive panel at a future pull-off area on the northbound side of CR 515 in Hardyston or Vernon. This small panel would further develop the conservation history theme, describe the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (in planting stands of conifers still visible from the roadway), and describe wildlife habitats in the Watershed.
- An interpretive panel at the entrance to Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) with information on the formation of the WMA, its preserved natural habitats, and recreational uses.
- An interpretive panel at the Cider Mill House complex, with information on the original William Crampton House, the cider mill, and the role of small-scale industry in village life.
- A kiosk at the Appalachian Trail parking area and trailhead on NJ 94, focusing on the history and significance of the trail. A separate interpretive panel (or panels) could serve as a nature exhibit on species commonly seen along nearby sections of the trail.
- An interpretive panel at Hinchman-Rickey Farm on the history of the farm and homestead, the King's Highway and the role Vernon's farmers played in the Revolutionary War.

Potential locations for interpretive displays on the byway loop include:

- A kiosk or panel in Vernon Center (potentially located at St. Thomas Episcopal Church), focused on the history of Vernon Village and various sites that can be explored on foot or by bicycle.
- An interpretive panel at an access point to the planned greenway/trail system in Vernon, with a nature exhibit featuring species commonly seen on the trails.
- An interpretive panel in McAfee on the village's industrial history, including the role of the railroad and limestone mining.³²

F2: Develop mobile application with interpretive information and audio tours

Another recommended strategy is to develop a mobile app that visitors can use on a cellphone or tablet, with interpretive information and practical guidance for byway users. The app would incorporate touring information for real-time use by visitors. Ideally, this would include an audio tour synchronized with GPS-based turn-by-turn narration. Since the cellular service along the byway is spotty, the app should incorporate a GPS-based geo-locating function to ensure it is responsive in areas of intermittent cellular coverage, and users would be encouraged to download the app before their visit.

A major advantage of an audio tour would be the ability to point out sights or tell stories about the byway based on the traveler's actual location, while allowing safe, hands-free use by drivers.³³ In addition to the wayside interpretive locations described above, the mobile app could reveal various "hidden" stories along the byway. The following are some potential hidden elements on

³² In 1879, lime quarry workers were paid \$1.25 per day, according to local historian Jennie Sweetman ("Vernon's limestone kilns remain in McAfee Valley," NJ Herald, February 25, 2012)

³³ An example of this technology is the Gypsy Guide: <https://gypsyguide.com/>

the byway spine which the mobile app's narrator could point out as a vehicle passes the relevant location:

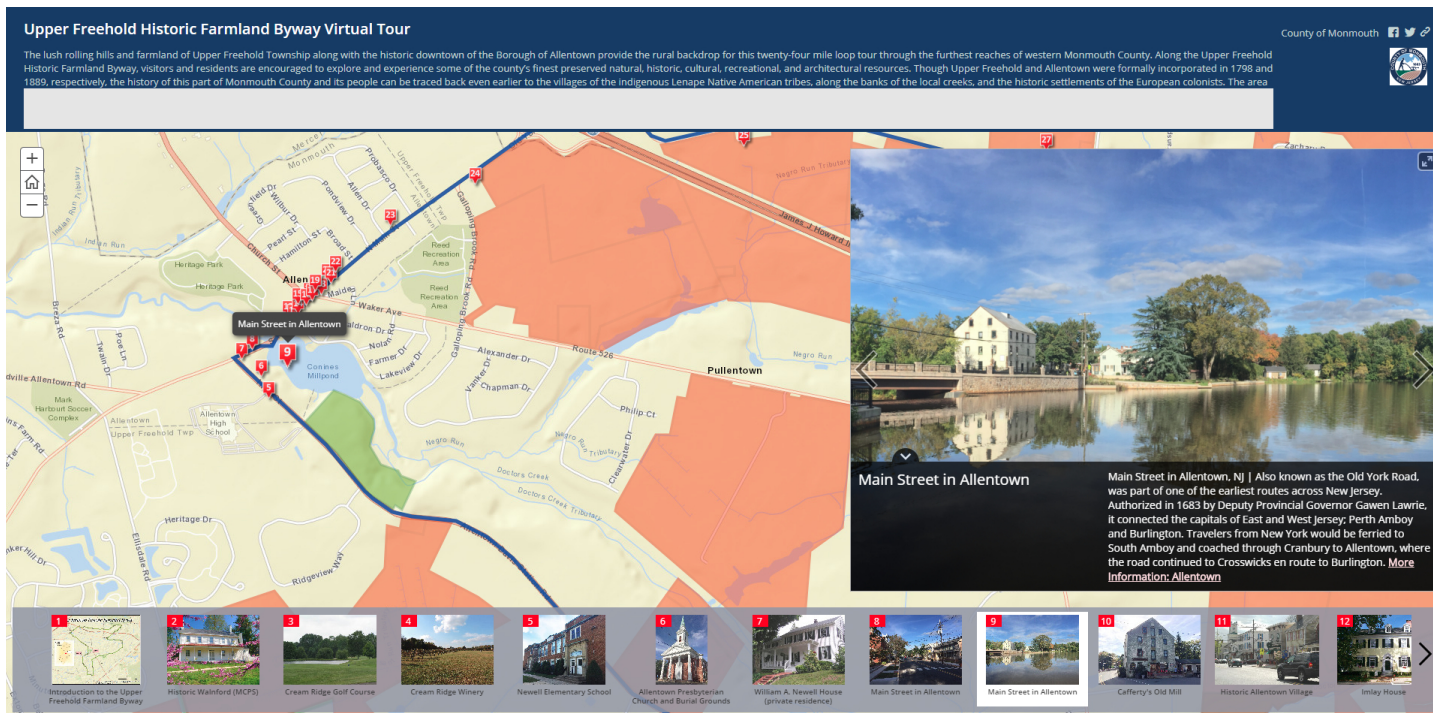
- The stone wall where the Kincaid House Hotel once stood in Hardyston (mile 0.4)
- A small pond on the northbound side of CR 515 (mile 5.3) where a beaver dam can often be seen
- A stand of conifers planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps (at mile 5.3)
- The location once known as Tory Rock
- Sisco Hill, and the mountains that can be seen in the distance on the descent
- The vicinity of Mastodon Lake and the mastodon discovery
- Cedar Crest farm, with its dual roles as dairy farm and Township Clerk's office
- The Sea Captain's House, where noted railroad inventor Ross Winans developed the pivoting "car truck"
- The Van Dokkenburg Farm and the beginning of the preserved farmland corridor north of Vernon
- The arrival at the New York border and the "Border Wars" between New York and New Jersey

On the loop, the audio tour could call out other historic properties including Stewart House, the McAfee Bible Church, as well as limestone formations and the stories behind older farm buildings encountered along the road. Apart from audio tours, the mobile app could include a storytelling feature with narrated stories about life along the byway in earlier times.

F3: Develop virtual tour for byway website

Recommendations for a dedicated website are described in the next chapter. The website should incorporate interpretive information on each of the priority themes, as well as suggested itineraries for visitors with different interests. A virtual tour of the byway could also be developed for the website, with photographs, video clips, and text. The virtual tour would provide a means of experiencing the byway for persons unable to travel to the area, or for previewing the byway as part of trip planning. It could include photographs of historic and archaeological artifacts in the collection of the Vernon Township Historical Society. An example is the virtual tour developed by Monmouth County for the Upper Freehold Historic Farmland Byway as shown on the next page.





Sample screen from virtual tour, Upper Freehold Historic Farmland Byway

F4: Document farms and farming activity along the byway

Since farming is an important aspect of local history, and it contributes so significantly to the byway's character, another recommendation is to prepare detailed documentation about farming history and practices along the byway up to the present time. Documentation could include written descriptions, maps, photographs, and audio or video recordings. Local volunteers could conduct oral histories with long-time farmers or their descendants, which would form a valuable record. Some of this information could be used to enrich the virtual tour, mobile app, and interpretive panels; it could also be incorporated into a published volume.

F5: Create historic visualizations

Another strategy to help byway users appreciate Vernon's past would be to create historic visualizations based on old photographs. These could range from simple renderings or "then and now" comparisons to more sophisticated visual models that reconstruct the original appearance of a site in its present-day context. Such visualizations could be provided in a variety of ways: on the website, on interpretive panels, and as part of the proposed mobile app. Another option would be using an "augmented reality" app that allows the user to point a phone at a site and "see" what used to exist there.

A potential location for a virtual historic reconstruction is the Margarum Farm in Hardyston, where a visualization could be used to recreate the gristmill, sawmill, and forge that previously occupied the property. (Alternatively, this approach could be applied to the remains of the

Seward Homestead, also in Hardyston.) A simpler “then and now” comparison could feature the Hinchman-Rickey Farm, where a photograph of dairy cows crossing NJ 94 in 1912 could be contrasted with today’s conditions.

F6: Identify historic sites to open to visitors on weekly or monthly basis

Very few of the historic sites on the byway corridor are open to visitors on an established schedule, and many are not open to the public at all. By identifying two or three sites that could be opened to visitors on a regular weekly (or even monthly) basis, the ability of both visitors and residents to connect with local history would be greatly enhanced. Price’s Switch Schoolhouse would be one candidate for regular opening hours. This site is currently owned by Sussex County, with the Historical Society serving as its steward. Continued participation by Vernon and Hardyston in the annual Sussex County Heritage Weekend will also help increase awareness of the area’s history.

F7: Investigate the potential to develop a visitor’s center

In the longer term, it may be feasible to develop a small visitor’s center with regular operating hours.



Present day site conditions



Historic site conditions



3D visualization using historic archaeological data to reconstruct the historic appearance of a site (Maryland)



Dairy cows crossing NJ 94 in 1912 at the Hinchman-Rickey Farm (Courtesy of Jamie Rickey)



The intersection of NJ 94 and CR 517 as it looked in 1907 (Courtesy of Vernon Township Historical Society)



TRUCKS
STEEP DOWNGRADE
USE LOWER GEAR

HILL
7

SPEED
LIMIT
45

NO STOPPING
HERE

8 Tourism, Marketing, and Visitor Services

The Western Highlands Scenic Byway area is rich with stunning landscapes, working farms, family-friendly events, recreational opportunities, and historic assets, all of which are desirable vacation (multi-day) or day trip features. And just beyond the byway is an abundance of other experiences awaiting visitors to Sussex County and surrounding areas. The byway is uniquely positioned to be a regional tourism hub, with spokes spurring off the 21-mile route.

One of the goals of this plan is to “partner with public agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, interested organizations, and the business community to promote four-season outdoor recreation, heritage tourism, and agritourism throughout the byway corridor.” This chapter presents recommendations for establishing and strengthening tourism partnerships, developing a byway brand, promoting awareness and interest in the byway, and expanding the services available to visitors during their stay.

Tourism and Marketing Strategies

G1: Create a non-profit Tourism Council to oversee tourism initiatives

Launching a successful tourism marketing initiative for the byway will require broad partnerships, with commitments from the business community and marketing expertise. The creation of a non-profit Tourism Council is recommended to provide the organizational framework and oversee the recommendations outlined in this chapter. The Tourism Council would work in collaboration with the Vernon Township Historical Society and current members of the scenic byway committee, but would

incorporate new perspectives and expertise in tourism and marketing. The Council would adopt by-laws and members would serve for a designated term, such as three years. Council members should represent a variety of local interests, both public and private, including the following:

- Business community representatives (including existing tourism-oriented enterprises)
- Marketing/public relations expertise
- Historic resources expertise (including the Vernon Township and Sussex County Historical Societies)
- Recreation community
- Agricultural community
- Environmental community, and
- Other advocacy or special interest groups.

The Tourism Council would craft the story of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway in a manner that translates across media (e.g., print, online, interpretive signage) and share this story from a unified voice to inform tourism promotion efforts. Although promotional strategies may evolve, the byway narrative would remain constant.

G2: Develop byway branding and a cohesive, highly visual website

Most travelers receive destination or travel recommendations from friends and family, followed closely by internet searches.³⁴ A growing number of visitors discover travel information on social media.

Potential travelers may find information about byway assets and destinations online, through the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism, Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, and independent tourism-focused websites, such as New Jersey Skylands. However, these websites vary in design, content, and frequency of updated information. Therefore, potential visitors must research a variety of sources for a comprehensive understanding of the area. They may cross-reference maps to determine the location of their destination(s) relative to the byway, which could take a considerable amount of time and lead to confusion.

Research has shown that vacationers experience the biggest boost in happiness when planning the trip, anticipating good times ahead.³⁵ The travel research experience should be improved to encourage visitors to commit to a Western Highlands Scenic Byway trip by implementing the following steps:

- Seek grant funding to execute branding and website design and management. A potential source is a Cooperative Marketing Grant from the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism.
- Branding has the potential to transform public perception of the area. Use the established

³⁴ C. Schutz, DK Shifflet & Associates, “New Jersey Image and Advertising Return on Investment,” prepared for New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism, 2009

³⁵ J. Nawijn, M. Marchand, R. Veenhoven and A. Vingerhoets, “Vacationers Happier, but Most Not Happier After a Holiday,” Applied Research in Quality of Life, 5(1): 35-47, 2010

byway logo to inform design elements such as the fonts, color palette, and feel of branding. Consider establishing a tag line that conveys the unique identity of the byway.

- Develop a style guide to promote consistent branding. The style guide should reflect the existing branding of the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program. Apply the branding to all byway information and marketing materials. This visual continuity lends to a distinguished visitor experience.
- Create and manage a cohesive, branded, and visual website. Develop content, using the outline in Appendix E as guidance.
 - Highlight key destinations, including lodging and dining options, major events, as well as seasonal recreational, agricultural, and eco-tourism opportunities and resources (e.g. related shops, training facilities). These listings should include information on accessibility for users of wheelchairs/walking aids.
 - Use dynamic maps, graphics, and the custom visuals to engage the audience. Instead of long paragraphs of text (which younger readers will skip over), opt for a curated library of visitor resources. The virtual tour concept described in Chapter 7 would be an effective way to organize this material.
 - Strategically link to relevant resources (e.g., the NJDOT web page for the nearby Warren Heritage Scenic Byway website; Mountain Creek resort; New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Sussex Fairgrounds). Periodically ensure that the links function, as websites change over time.
 - Include a contact page for public comments, questions, feedback, or photos.
 - Link to social media (see below).
- Engage a professional web developer to create and help manage the site. Incorporate User Experience (UX) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices, as well as compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Include the following SEO key words: scenic byway, scenic roadways, scenic roads, and scenic drive. Determine frequency of website update and management of comment portal.
- Create a press kit for easy public download. Include edited video clips to convey the byway's value.

G3: Create guided tours for the website and mobile app

Byway visitors (and potential visitors) need information and suggestions on where to go and what to see on their trip. Several types of touring information are recommended, including the virtual tour and mobile app described in the previous chapter. Themed itineraries should be developed for the website and the mobile app to appeal to travelers with different interests. These themes could include:

- **Heritage Tourism:** Stockholm United Methodist Church, Price's Switch Schoolhouse, Black Creek Site, mining sites such as McAfee Limestone Kiln, the general area of Mastodon Lake
- **Four Seasons of Recreation:** opportunities for downhill skiing, snowboarding, snow



tubing, cross-country skiing, kayaking, horseback riding, cycling, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, golfing, motorcycling and shops that support these activities

- **Agritourism:** Heaven Hill Farm, Vernon Valley Farm, Meadowburn Farm (open for events only), Hinchman-Rickey Farm, and small roadside vendors. Highlight the dairy, honey, garlic, meat/poultry, and other locally grown resources of the byway.
- **Ecotourism:** hiking, photography, birdwatching, butterfly walks, Stairway to Heaven, Pinwheel Vista, Appalachian Trail, Wawayanda State Park, Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge, camping
- **Family Fun:** Treescape Aerial Adventure Park, Mountain Creek, Crystal Springs Resort, Skylands Ice World, easy hikes, picnic areas



Potential interface for the mobile app

The tours should be updated over time, to remain relevant and fresh.³⁶

G4: Engage a photographer for print and digital marketing purposes

Existing photos of the byway’s scenic and historic resources are a useful starting point for developing the website and virtual tour. However, the use of a professional photographer/ videographer is recommended to create compelling marketing materials that capture other dimensions of the byway, such as images of people engaged in active recreation, agritourism, and ecotourism. Images and video clips should feature all four seasons, various times of day, and different types of travelers enjoying the byway. These photos and videos would become a valuable basis for marketing and storytelling, including social media posts. One of the local resorts might be able to assist with this effort.

G5: Develop and distribute byway brochure

A print brochure remains a valuable tool for informing potential visitors, residents, and people passing through the area about the byway. The bi-fold prototype in Appendix F is intended as a starting point for the brochure. Once finalized, the brochure should be produced and distributed at local lodging, visitor/welcome centers, and at strategic highway rest stops, such as the Molly Pitcher stop in Monroe Township.

G6: Develop a family-friendly byway mascot and materials

A byway mascot could help augment the byway brand and could be used to create materials that appeal to the youngest visitors. An animal character that is relevant to the byway’s history or

³⁶ Examples of web-based tours can be found at <https://www.myscenicdrives.com/> and <https://gypsyguide.com/>

wildlife could be chosen, such as the red-tailed hawk featured in the byway logo or “Matilda the Mastodon.”

- Hire a local artist or designer to create the branded mascot artwork, complete with a persona and voice. Strive for a lighthearted take on a character with a relationship to the byway. Coordinate with broader branding and storytelling efforts to carry the mascot theme across promotional materials.
- Explore development of a printed “Travel Bingo,” an interactive activity for families to identify elements that define the byway (e.g. red barn, American flag, white church). Travel bingo could be printed on a partner restaurant’s paper placemats, for example.
- Incorporate the chosen mascot into a family-friendly tourism “passport.”³⁷
- Explore New Jersey Historical Society grant opportunities to support this initiative, such as the Project Grant.

G7: Develop a byway business partnership program

Local businesses are among the most important partners for the development and promotion of the byway. Potential business partners include restaurants, groceries, hotels, shops, and the major resorts. Vernon merchants currently participate in a variety of similar programs including the Vernon Township Historical Society’s discount program and the Vernon Township Recreation Department’s Trail Challenge program.

- Work with the Vernon Chamber of Commerce to identify and recruit byway business partners for cross-promotion efforts. Participating businesses would receive identifying materials such as window clings and would be listed in the services section of the byway website.
- Cross-promote the byway with organizations and outfitters that serve the following:
 - Skiers
 - Golfers
 - Hunters, fishers, and fly-fishers
 - Local and regional motorcyclists
 - Road and mountain biking, road running, or trail running race/competition organizers
- Incentivize visitors and residents to visit multiple destinations by offering a free ice cream cone or discounted experience as a reward for collecting several passport stamps or completing a Travel Bingo card.
- Create and distribute a mascot footprint rubber stamp or stickers to the business partners. Consider partnering with these businesses to offset production costs.

³⁷ An example of a tourism passport program can be found at <https://passport.explorethebruce.com/>

- Offer incentives for local businesses to request reviews on Yelp, Google, and other sites. More user-submitted reviews and ratings helps increase visibility of local businesses.

G8: Establish social media marketing, including an Instagram handle and Facebook page

Social media can be an integral element in the byway’s marketing. The following steps are recommended:

- Establish a Western Highlands Scenic Byway Instagram handle and Facebook page. Identify content themes and a general posting schedule.
- Appoint a dedicated social media task manager to identify social media policy, post a variety of information frequently (a minimum of three times per week), respond to comments, and comment on related pages and groups’ posts to establish a presence in relevant tourism and transportation threads. This individual could also serve as the website manager.
- Create “places” with social media.
 - Encourage visitors to tell their own stories and share byway experiences by indicating “Selfie Stops” at various points on the byway. Promote a unique hashtag, such as #HelloWesternHighlands or #ScenicSelfie.
 - Simple murals or other public art along the byway can draw visitors seeking photo opportunities. Public art in places such as Nashville, TN and Austin, TX have gone viral on social media, spurring increased tourism. The artwork does not need to be particularly intricate to be a “must see” for visitors looking for photo opportunities, but it should be promoted, especially with a defined social media hashtag. The art should display a positive message that boosts local pride and unity. Coordinate with local art groups to identify the appropriate artist, medium, and location(s).



Example of business partner program for a trail in Mercer County, NJ

G9: Develop a media marketing strategy for the byway

The news media is an important partner for tourism promotion. In addition to developing a press kit for the website, press releases and/or story pitches could be submitted to media geared to various niche audiences.

- Use the *TimeOutNY* travel edition to reach the metro New York population seeking weekend getaways. A similar approach could be considered for other urban areas, such as metro Philadelphia.
- Press releases could feature fall foliage tours and other eco-tourism opportunities, as well as annual events such as the Sussex County Heritage Weekend and the Vernon Township Historical Society’s History and Archaeology Day.

- Promote the byway with feature articles in regional travel and events publications, such as *Skylands Visitor* magazine and *dirt* magazine.
- Other opportunities include national organizations with state divisions (AAA, AARP).
- Travel blogs are another potential resource.
- Area radio stations should be included in the media outreach strategy.
- Information published by third-party resources should be reviewed periodically to ensure accuracy.

G10: Consider installation of a promotional billboard on NJ 23

An abandoned billboard frame can be seen along NJ 23 northbound, shortly before the entrance to the byway (just after the intersection at Canistear Road). This could be a good location for a promotional billboard about the byway, if the frame is in usable condition and suitable terms can be negotiated with the owner. The property at this location is owned by the City of Newark.

G11: Develop partnerships with travel and tourism organizations to promote the byway

Coordinating with third-party map developers, GPS purveyors, travel, lodging, and alternative transportation resources can elevate awareness of and access to the byway.

- Develop a byway presence on websites such as the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism, National Geographic’s Scenic Wild Delaware River website, Sussex County, TripAdvisor, and Expedia.
- Submit geospatial byway information to map services including Google Maps, Yahoo Maps, Rand McNally, and Garmin.
- Coordinate with the local and county Chambers of Commerce to ensure a regular flow of information, and insight to niche travel groups. The *Warwick Valley Guide*, published by the Warwick Valley Chamber of Commerce, includes some listings in Vernon and Hardyston and could be an opportunity for cross-promotion.
- Consider partnering with another New Jersey byway, such as the Warren Heritage Byway, to help attract those visitors who prefer to tour multiple byways on a trip. This could include providing links and a suggested scenic route between the byways.
- Appeal to populations without cars, including young



Billboard frame on NJ 23 northbound might be used to promote the byway

people and city dwellers, by offering transportation alternatives to experience the byway.

- Submit media kits to car-sharing sites for car-free populations (often young adults and city dwellers) to access the byway region.³⁸
- Support efforts for shuttle transportation between strategic public transportation stops and hubs (see strategy C7, Chapter 6).
- Support local resorts' efforts to host events such as Tough Mudder and Spartan Race, which draw tourists who typically lodge and spend money on food, drink, and gas close to the race site.

G12: Create farm-based itineraries and market agricultural events

Agriculture and tourism are fundamental to Sussex County's economy. Throughout the year, agritourism opportunities abound, from sleigh rides through farmland in winter, to picking fruits and vegetables in summer. Sussex County's Farm Visits website (www.sussexfarmvisits.com) is a comprehensive resource that includes farms, wineries, vineyards, certified Organic vendors, nurseries, butchers, Christmas trees, and equestrian-related activities, among others. The Farm Visits site also includes contacts for camping, lodging, and State and National Parks. The information is regularly updated and is available both online and in a printed brochure at key locations throughout the County. Marketing efforts for the byway should complement and build upon this resource.

- Create niche, self-guided tours and market key events that define local agritourism:
 - Support and cross-promote events such as the annual Honey & Garlic Festival in Sussex County. Identify similar events suitable to properties along the byway.
 - Create themed trails, focusing on dairy, honey, garlic, meat/poultry, wine, or craft beer to draw visitors to farms, farm stands, ranches, vineyards, and microbreweries. This helps support local farmers, producers, and purveyors. Include information and links in the byway website and mobile app.
 - Capitalize on the appeal and diversity of four seasons. In the fall, create and post an online itinerary that links corn mazes, hayrides, and apple and pumpkin picking opportunities. In the winter, connect Christmas tree cutting, sleigh rides, and other activities.
- Introduce local farmers to Farm Stay, U.S., an online resource at <http://www.farmstayus.com/> for opening one's farmland to host visitors and providing quality farm-based lodging and experiences, such as demonstrations of cheese-making.
- Capitalize on national trends by cross-promoting "Buy Local" campaigns and farmers markets.
- Support Farm-to-Table events. Focus both on large-scale vendors (such as Crystal Springs) that advertise reliance on local farmers and producers, and smaller vendors who have less

³⁸ Car sharing programs include:
<https://www.car2go.com/US/en/>
<https://turo.com/>
<https://www.zipcar.com/>

capital, marketing ability, and reach, but are ingrained in the local agricultural economy.

G13: Promote Vernon's Appalachian Trail Community designation

Feature Vernon's new designation as an Appalachian Trail Community in promotional materials for the byway. This recognition provides an opportunity to build linkages between the trail and byway. For example, hiker discounts on local goods or services could be incorporated in the business partner program. Transportation connections for hikers to access Vernon destinations should also be explored (see strategy C7). This might include a shuttle service at peak times, supplemented by an Uber-style on-demand ride-hailing service geared toward hikers.

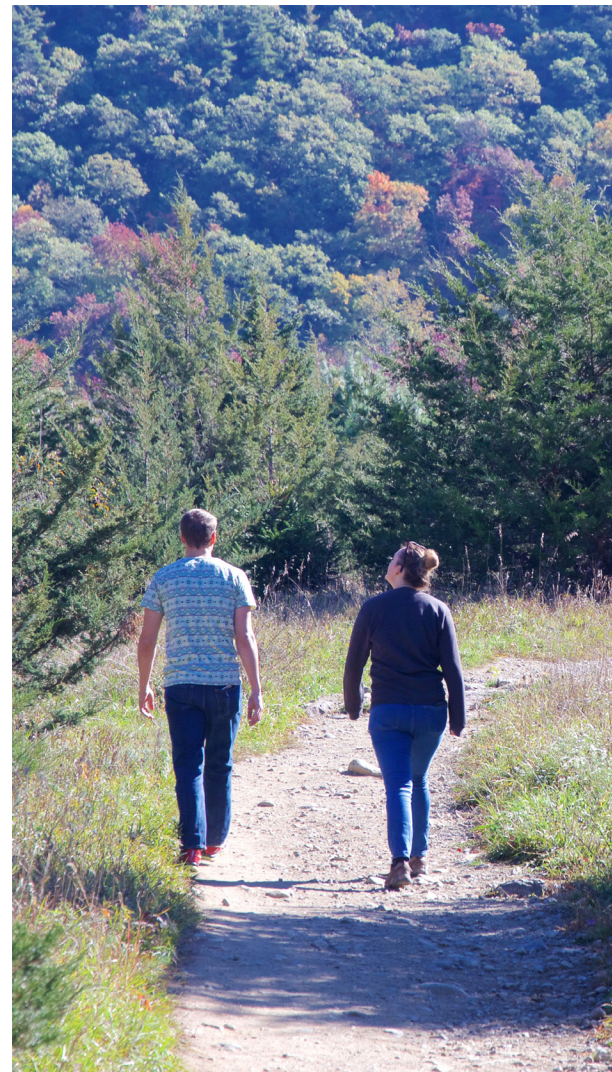
Local events could also be developed as part of National Trails Day (which is not limited to a single day). Currently, area trails organizations focus their Trails Day efforts at Bear Mountain, NY, which is accessible by transit. However, that would not preclude a local celebration, such as a food truck festival near the Stairway to Heaven trailhead. The tools available on the American Hiking Society's website at <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/host-information/> could be leveraged to increase awareness and interest.

Additionally, the Vernon Recreation Department's annual Trail Challenge should be featured on the byway website. This event, currently in its third year, encourages participants to log 50 miles on any of Vernon's trails, including the Appalachian Trail, during a defined period from June to October.

G14: Develop ecotourism marketing materials

The outstanding natural resources of the byway corridor and surrounding areas of Sussex County draw hikers, birders, hunters, and naturalists to the area. Niche marketing to various groups, such as birders, can help reinforce the area's identity as a premier ecotourism destination. Kayaking and canoeing could also be promoted.

- Birders from all over the globe flock to northwest New Jersey to view species unique to the area. Capitalize on the lucrative birding tourism industry by cross-promoting with regional, state, and national conservation groups, such as the national Audubon Society or outdoor outfitters. They develop programs and educate enthusiasts on bird-related tourism.
- Promote and participate in the New Jersey Audubon World Series of Birding, part of a national birding competition held each year in May that helps to raise money for conservation.
- Consider restarting the Sussex County Birding and Nature Festival, an event formerly held in June through



a partnership of Sussex County, the Nature Conservancy, Sussex County Farm and Horse Show and the Sussex County Board of Agriculture.

- Promote kayaking and canoeing as opportunities to enjoy the natural environment. Coordinate with the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge to promote the Wallkill River canoe trail as a convenient side trip from the byway.
- On the website and mobile app, incorporate information on alternatives to the major parks when they reach capacity in high season. This could include smaller parks and picnic areas, for example. Note permissible activities and hours/seasons of operation.

G15: Coordinate with the NJ Scenic Byways Program's statewide marketing initiative

The New Jersey Scenic Byways Program has embarked on a statewide marketing initiative that will be guided by travel data and market research. The information gained from this study should be leveraged as appropriate to tailor the marketing strategies and messaging for the Western Highlands Scenic Byway. Additionally, there may be opportunities to partner with the New Jersey byways as a group to help develop statewide marketing materials.

G16: Conduct a market study to identify niche tourism strategies

A market study could help to prioritize and refine the strategies identified in this chapter based on quantitative data. For example, a market study could help quantify the area's potential market for various subgroups--whether New York metro area weekenders, millennials, history buffs, birders, or other groups, enabling the byway committee and Tourism Council to pinpoint the most promising target markets. The study could also identify the primary information channels these visitors use to learn about new destinations or plan a trip, and the types of activities and services they typically look for. This information would help in developing a strategic approach to the overall effort and in customizing the materials developed, such as the themed itineraries and promotional materials. It could also help identify gaps in visitors' services (such as types of lodging or dining) that may currently limit the growth potential for some of these markets. Highlands Council Sustainable Economic Development planning grants are a potential source of funds for a tourism market study.

Visitor Services

Visitor services are a critical element in attracting tourists and encouraging repeat visits. Expanded options for lodging, dining, and shopping would help the Western Highlands Scenic Byway compete more successfully with other destinations for niche tourism. A long-term strategy to diversify lodging options and attract small-scale entrepreneurs could have significant benefits.

H1: Support expanded lodging options

Byway lodging options consist of two higher-end resorts (Minerals and Mountain Creek), one bed and breakfast, and one motel. There are limited camping options in the immediate area, including group campsites at Wawayanda State Park. Potential travelers may be discouraged by a

lack of mid-point lodging options and amenities. A key recommendation is to support local and regional initiatives to court a broader range of lodging options to suit distinct traveler types and budgets. This could include more bed and breakfasts, farm stays, and camping options, potentially including high-end campsites or “glamping” (see sidebar).

H2: Support legislation to allow property owners to rent temporary lodging

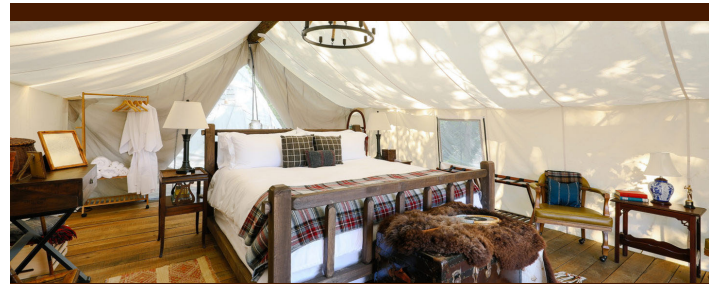
Temporary lodging through websites such as AirBnB, Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO), and HomeAway would also help to expand and diversify lodging options for byway visitors. Byway partners could support legislation that allows property owners to rent out all or part of their property through these services. AirBnB also advertises experiences. If regulations allow, seek opportunities to provide content for these sites that tells the story of Western Highlands travel opportunities.

H3: Encourage expansion of options for dining and shopping

Byway visitors often seek out unique restaurants and cafes as well as one-of-a-kind shops. While the Western Highlands Scenic Byway has a variety of restaurants and shops, the number and range of offerings could be expanded if willing entrepreneurs can be found. Temporary pop-up shops or craft fairs could be another way to expand shopping opportunities, as would an occasional open artists’ studio day.

H4: Encourage and market picnic opportunities along the byway

In the near term, the byway could be positioned as the perfect place for a picnic during the warmer months. Information on the website and mobile app could identify optimal picnic spots and local vendors such as food stores, delis, and coffee shops where visitors can grab a lunch to go. These vendors could be encouraged to participate in the byway partners program, potentially offering a discount to picnickers with a byway passport and receiving window clings. Specialty sandwiches with distinctive names might be featured. Picnic tables located around the byway could be branded with a distinct byway color scheme, or decorated individually by local artists.



Courtesy of Collective Retreats-Hudson Valley

“Glamping” (Glamorous Camping)

Camping is popular in Sussex County, with several campgrounds available. A rising travel trend is known as “glamping”. This combination of glamour and camping takes many forms, such as lodging in teepees, tents, working farms, and cabins. Glampers seek experiences immersed in local culture, history, or agriculture without the responsibility of bringing a tent or provisions. If a local landowner could be encouraged to offer glamping, it could attract notice and new visitors to the area.



9 Implementing the Plan

This Corridor Management Plan has identified goals and strategies for preserving and enhancing the byway's unique qualities, building an appreciation of these resources, and encouraging tourism. These actions will require coordination and collaboration among a variety of organizations over a period of several years.

The following table lists the identified strategies along with potential lead and partner organizations, and potential funding sources. The strategies are also classified by time frame (short, medium, long-term, and ongoing). The highest priority strategies are highlighted in yellow.

Corridor Management Plan - Implementation

	Strategy/Action	Time-frame	Potential Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Potential Funding Sources
A. Landscape Conservation & Enhancement					
A1	Reduce and avoid road sign clutter	ongoing	Sussex Co., NJDOT		Regular work programs
A2	Enforce restrictions on off-premise advertising signs	ongoing	Vernon Twp, Hardyston Twp code enforcement		Regular work programs
A3	Add prohibition on new billboards to local ordinances	short	Hardyston Twp		n/a
A4	Consider repurposing existing billboard for byway display	med/long	Tourism Council		
A5	Control roadside litter	ongoing	Sussex Co., NJDOT	Local civic groups, NJ Clean Communities program	
A6	Use landscaping to screen chief visual detractors	med	Byway Committee	Vernon Twp, Hardyston Twp, property owners, NJDOT, Sussex Co.	TAP program-beautification; developers
A7	Employ roadside management to open views and vistas	ongoing	Civic groups	Master Gardeners, Newark Watershed, NJDOT, Sussex Co.	
A8	Consider adding native wildflowers along the roadsides	med	Civic groups	Master Gardeners, NJDOT, Sussex Co., Sustainable Jersey	
A9	Promote health of trees and assess the extent of invasive species along the byway	med	Vernon/Hardyston Environmental Commissions	Master Gardeners, Tree City USA, Ridge & Valley Conservancy, Wallkill Watershed Management Group, Sustainable Jersey	TAP program-vegetation management in transportation rights-of-way
A10	Improve appearance of road divider approaching Vernon Center	med	Vernon Twp	Sussex Co.	NJDOT Local Aid & Economic Development; TAP program-beautification
A11	Support future streetscape improvements in Vernon Town Center	med/long	Vernon Twp	Property owners/ developers, NJDOT, Sussex Co.	Developers

Strategy/Action	Time-frame	Potential Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Potential Funding Sources	
A12	Conduct visual assessment of CR 517 between CR 644 and McPeck Road	short	Byway Committee	n/a - volunteer effort	
B. Historic Character of Roadside					
B1	Assess priorities for preservation or restoration of vulnerable historic structures and landscapes	short/med	Vernon Township Historical Society (VTHS)	Vernon Twp Historic Preservation Commission, Sussex Co. Historical Society	NJ Historic Trust planning grants
B2	Investigate the feasibility of restoring historic stone walls	short	VTHS	Interested property owners, Sussex Co. Sheriff's program, NJDOT	NJ Historic Trust planning grants/ construction grants
B3	Evaluate potential for aesthetic improvements at entrance to Stockholm United Methodist Church	short/med	Byway Committee	Church leadership	Private grants/fundraising
B4	Encourage compatible redevelopment of Vernon redevelopment areas	ongoing	Vernon Twp Land Use Board	Property owners/ developers	n/a
B5	Encourage context-sensitive treatments for future road and bridge projects	ongoing	NJDOT, Sussex Co.	Vernon and Hardyston Twps	n/a
B6	Investigate potential for an Historic Farming District in Vernon Township	med	VTHS	Vernon Historical Commission; interested farm owners	NJ Historic Trust planning grants
B7	Maintain a strong farming presence	ongoing	Sussex Co. Board of Agriculture	NJ Department of Agriculture, USDA NJ Rural Development Office	USDA Value-Added Producer Grants; Highlands Council Sustainable Economic Development Planning Grants-Agricultural Retention Plans
C. Transportation and Safety					
C1	Investigate the potential to develop pull-off areas along CR 515	med	Sussex Co.	Highlands Council	NJDOT Local Aid & Economic Development; TAP program-turnouts/overlooks
C2	Investigate and develop pedestrian crossing improvements at Appalachian Trail crossing of NJ 94	short	NJDOT	Wawayanda State Park	Regular work program

	Strategy/Action	Time-frame	Potential Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Potential Funding Sources
C3	Investigate feasibility of expanding Appalachian Trail parking at or near NJ 94 and possible creation of scenic overlook	med	NJDEP/Wawayanda State Park	NY-NJ Trail Conference, National Park Service	TAP program-construction of overlooks and viewing areas
C4	Support pedestrian mobility improvements in Vernon Town Center	ongoing	Vernon Twp	Sussex Co., NJDOT, developers	NJDOT Local Aid & Economic Development; TAP program
C5	Provide connections to future greenways and trails	med	Vernon Twp		
C6	Provide pedestrian and bicycle access to selected byway points of interest, where feasible	med/long	Byway Committee	Sussex Co., NJDOT, Vernon Twp	
C7	Explore the potential for new transit connections	med/long	Vernon Twp	NJ Transit, private coach operators, NY-NJ Trail Conference (for hiker shuttle)	
C8	Investigate locations with higher crash rates	med	NJDOT, Sussex Co.		Regular work programs
C9	Monitor crash data along the byway periodically	ongoing	NJDOT, Sussex Co.		Regular work programs
D. Byway Signing and Navigation					
D1	Install scenic byway signs in accordance with NJDOT guidelines	short	NJDOT, Sussex Co.	Vernon Twp	Engineering budgets
D2	Develop touring map and narrative with turn-by-turn directions	short	Byway Committee		
D3	Explore opportunities for related sign systems	med	Vernon Chamber of Commerce	Byway Committee	
E. Other Management Strategies					
E1	Clear streams to expand opportunities for canoeing and kayaking	long	Wallkill Natl Wildlife Refuge	Wallkill River Watershed Management Group; Vernon Environmental Commission	

	Strategy/Action	Time-frame	Potential Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Potential Funding Sources
E2	Encourage special events such as outdoor concerts, movie showings, and performing arts	short/med	Tourism Council	Chambers of Commerce; Sussex Co. Arts and Heritage Council; Vernon Twp Recreation Committee	Event fees
E3	Consider extension of byway into NY State and/or addition of side trips	long	Byway Committee	NJDOT Scenic Byways Program, NYSDOT, Sussex Co.	n/a
E4	Adopt Corridor Management Plan as element in local master plans	short	Byway Committee	Sussex Co., Vernon Twp, Hardyston Twp	
F. Interpretive Strategies					
F1	Develop wayside kiosks and interpretive panels at strategic locations	med/long	Byway Committee/VTHS	Property owners at potential kiosk locations, Sussex Co. Historical Society	NJ Historical Commission, NJ Historic Trust
F2	Develop mobile app with interpretive information and audio tours	short/med	Tourism Council	NJ Inst of Technology capstone program, owners of featured locations	NJ Historic Trust Heritage Tourism grants; public-private partnerships
F3	Develop virtual tour for byway website	med	Tourism Council	Sussex Co. (GIS resources)	
F4	Document farms and farming activity along the byway	short/med	VTHS	Sussex Co. Historical Society, student internships	NJ Historical Commission, NJ Historic Trust
F5	Create historic visualizations	med	VTHS	University partnership programs	NJ Historical Commission grants
F6	Identify historic sites to open to visitors on weekly or monthly basis	med	VTHS	Sussex Co. Historical Society	n/a
F7	Investigate potential to develop a visitor's center	long	VTHS	Tourism Council	NJ Historical Commission
G. Tourism & Marketing					
G1	Create a non-profit Tourism Council to oversee tourism initiatives	short	Byway Committee and multiple partner organizations		n/a

	Strategy/Action	Time-frame	Potential Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Potential Funding Sources
G2	Develop byway branding and a cohesive, highly visual website	short	Tourism Council		NJ Div of Travel & Tourism Cooperative Mktg Grant
G3	Create guided tours for the website and mobile app	medium	Tourism Council		NJ Div of Travel & Tourism Cooperative Mktg Grant
G4	Engage a photographer for print and digital marketing	medium	Tourism Council	Mountain Creek, Crystal Springs, volunteer photographer	
G5	Develop and distribute byway brochure	short	Tourism Council	Local businesses, Chambers of Commerce	NJ Div of Travel & Tourism Cooperative Mktg Grant
G6	Develop a family-friendly mascot and materials	short	Tourism Council	Local businesses, youth organizations	NJ Div of Travel & Tourism Cooperative Mktg Grant
G7	Develop a byway business partnership program	medium	Tourism Council	Chambers of Commerce, local businesses	NJ Div of Travel & Tourism Cooperative Mktg Grant
G8	Establish social media marketing, including an Instagram handle and Facebook page	short	Tourism Council	Student interns	NJ State Council on the Arts (for public art elements)
G9	Develop a media marketing strategy for the byway	ongoing	Tourism Council	Media outlets, bloggers	
G10	Consider installation of a promotional billboard on NJ 23	med	Tourism Council	City of Newark (property owner)	
G11	Develop partnerships with travel and tourism organizations to promote the byway	ongoing	Tourism Council	Sussex Skylands, NJ Division of Travel & Tourism, Chambers of Commerce, Warren Heritage Byway, National Geographic Scenic Wild Delaware, map services	
G12	Create farm-based itineraries and market agritourism events	med	Tourism Council	Sussex Co. Farm Visits; area farmers; Farm Stay USA, Sustainable Jersey	Highlands Council Sustainable Economic Development planning grants
G13	Promote Vernon's Appalachian Trail Community designation	ongoing	Tourism Council	NY-NJ Trail Conference, Wawayanda State Park, Vernon Twp Recreation Committee	

	Strategy/Action	Time-frame	Potential Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Potential Funding Sources
G14	Develop ecotourism marketing materials	med	Tourism Council	Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge, NJ Audubon, Sussex Co. Bird Club, Nature Conservancy	Highlands Council Sustainable Economic Development planning grants
G15	Coordinate with the NJ Scenic Byways Program's statewide marketing initiative	ongoing	Tourism Council	NJDOT	n/a
G16	Conduct a market study to identify niche tourism strategies	short	Tourism Council	Sussex Co.	Highlands Council Sustainable Economic Development planning grants
H. Visitor Services					
H1	Support expanded lodging options	long	Tourism Council	Chambers of Commerce	
H2	Support legislation to allow property owners to rent temporary lodging	med/long	Tourism Council	Chambers of Commerce, Legislators	
H3	Encourage expansion of options for dining and shopping	long	Tourism Council	Chambers of Commerce	
H4	Encourage and market picnic opportunities along the byway	short	Tourism Council	Chambers of Commerce, local groceries, delis, restaurants	

10 Appendices

Visual Survey

Visual Survey

A visual survey of the byway was conducted on July 12, 2017 by a professional landscape architect and six community volunteers. The survey was conducted in the afternoon under overcast conditions. It was based on the route previously proposed for the byway loop, which included portions of Sand Hill Road and McPeck Road.

The route was divided into segments and participants were asked to rate the visual quality of each segment on the following three criteria:

Vividness:

The memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns

Intactness:

The visual integrity of the natural and man built landscape, and its freedom from encroaching elements

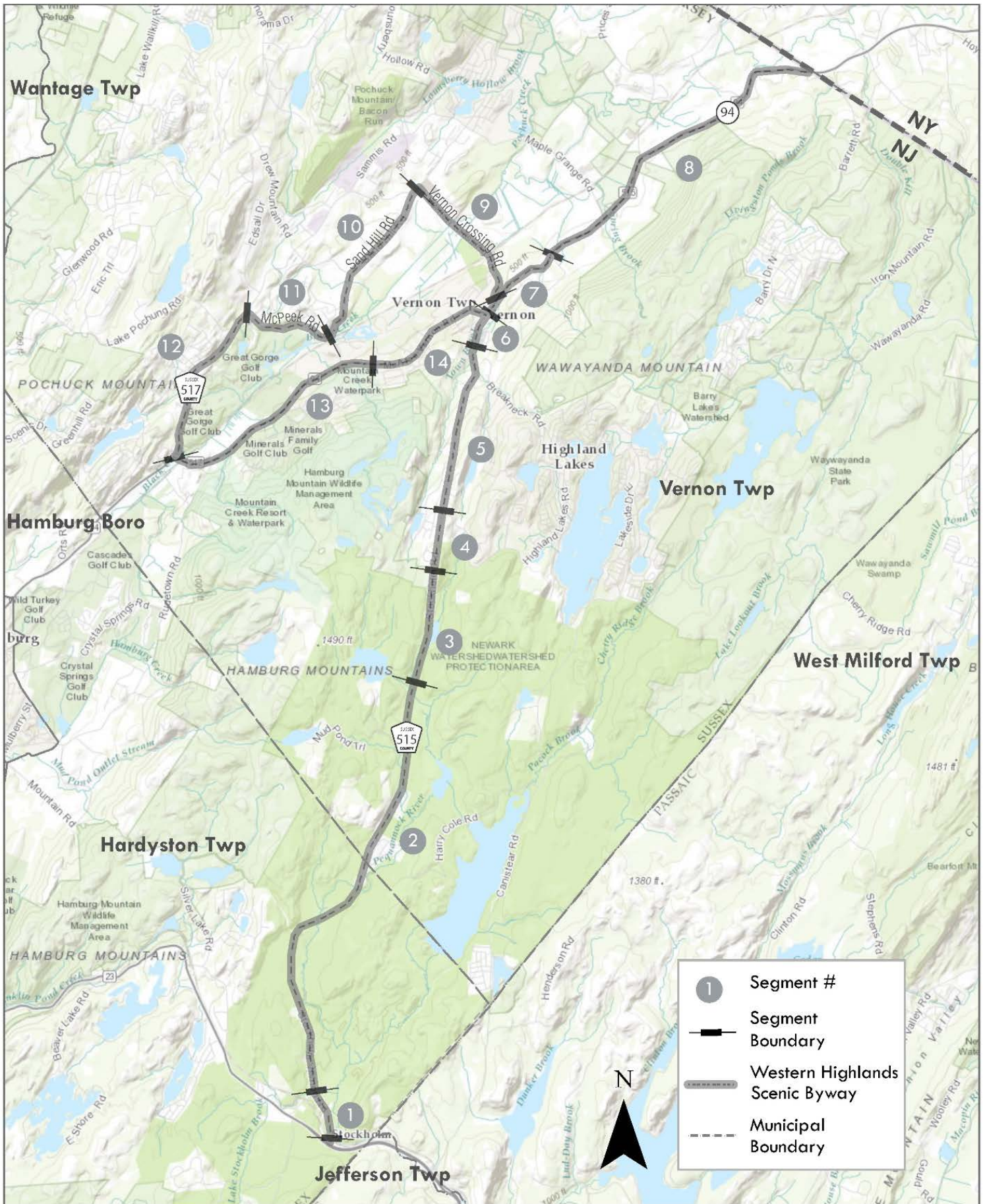
Unity:

The visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole

After a practice session using these criteria, each participant received a separate rating sheet for the northbound and southbound direction (and for the clockwise and counter-clockwise direction on the loop). They were asked to score each segment as negative, neutral, or positive for each of the three visual criteria. The rating sheet included space to add comments for every segment. Participants stopped periodically during the survey to discuss their observations.

Following the survey, the participants' scores for the three criteria were averaged to obtain an overall score for each segment in each direction. Based on feedback from the Scenic Byway Committee, it was determined that several segments should be combined due to their similarity in character and appearance. These segments were consolidated and their scores were averaged to obtain a revised score for the new consolidated segments. The resulting set of 14 segments is shown in the map on the next page. Summary information for each segment follows, including a description, representative photographs, scores, and participants' comments.

Scenic Byway Segment Locator Map



(Note: map reflects previously proposed route for byway loop)

Segment 1

Roadway: CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd.

Boundaries: NJ 23 - Snufftown Rd.

Character: Densely wooded, Historic Methodist Church, Municipal Building

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
47%	33%	20%	56%	44%	0%

While this segment offers views of the Stockholm United Methodist Church on the east side of the roadway, the church is out of the drivers' line of sight. Utilities and structures in a state of disrepair distract from the scenery. The segment received a low score in terms of intactness, particularly in the northbound direction.



Segment 2

Roadway: CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd.

Boundaries: Snufftown Rd - Pequannock River Tributary

Character: Historic homes, small vistas, hilly, water features, wooded

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
0%	44%	56%	7%	52%	41%

This segment is characterized by a nice wooded landscape and pleasant vegetation, such as tiger lilies, chicory, cattails, and wetland flora. Other positive attributes include a nice barn, pond, and a change in elevation. There is a clearing visible through the trees, but the view of water is obscured. An unkempt yard and a tractor trailer parked in a driveway affected the intactness and unity of the segment.



Segment 3

Roadway: CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd.

Boundaries: Pequannock River Tributary - Entrance to Hamburg Mountain WMA

Character: Natural, no development, densely wooded

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
0%	40%	60%	0%	67%	33%

The winding road, a stream on the west side, stands of evergreens, and the preserved natural character of this segment make it pleasant. The byway could potentially gain by trimming some of the evergreen trees, to give drivers a better view of a stream on the west side of the road.



Segment 4

Roadway: CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd.
 Boundaries: Entrance to Hamburg Mountain WMA - Highland Lakes Rd
 Character: Wildlife Management Area, transition to residential area

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
43%	36%	21%	0%	78%	22%

This segment is characterized by residential use and wooded slopes. There are decent wooded views on both sides of the road, and scenic views of mountains to the west that can be seen in the south bound direction. However, there is a billboard on the west side, which detracts from the scenery and disrupts the intactness.



Segment 5

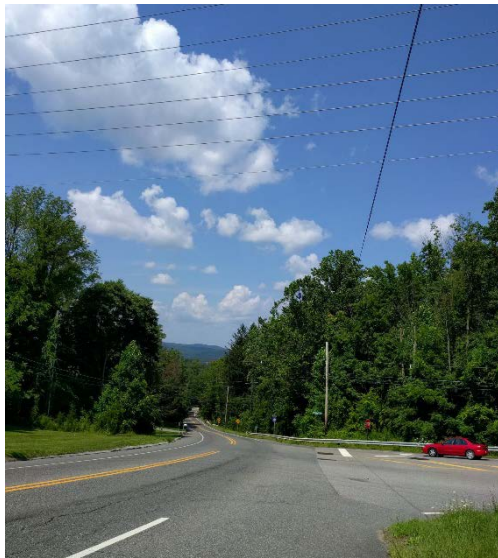
Roadway: CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd.

Boundaries: Highland Lakes Rd - The Daily Bean Coffee Shop

Character: Major descent with mountain views (Sisco Hill), residences, transition to town

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
8%	67%	25%	22%	56%	22%

This segment marks a transition to Vernon’s commercial center, with the southern portion of the segment mainly characterized as residential and wooded and the more commercial character in the northern portion. The striking views in the northbound direction descending into Vernon Town Center are very appealing. However, the power lines along this segment detract from the views. The overall score for this segment suffered slightly from a lack of unity and intactness.



Segment 6

Roadway: CR 515 Vernon Rd.

Boundaries: The Daily Bean Coffee Shop - NJ 94

Character: Commercial and residential town center development, traffic lights

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
67%	33%	0%	56%	44%	0%

The shopping centers and development along Segment 6, combined with prominent power lines, reduced this segment’s score significantly in all three categories. The road divider could use improvement. The pond in front of the fire house on the west side is a highlight, but could use landscaping.



Segment 7

Roadway: NJ 94

Boundaries: CR 515 Vernon Rd - Butternut Dr

Character: Light residential and commercial

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
0%	75%	25%	44%	56%	0%

The roadway is winding, with corn fields on the west, houses with historical character, and a stream on the east side. There is a house on the corner of NJ-94 and Vernon Crossing, previously the Old Cardinal Art Gallery, which could use maintenance.



Segment 8

Roadway: NJ 94

Boundaries: Butternut Dr - NY State Line

Character: Hinchman-Rickey Farm, Appalachian Trail, views

NB			SB		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
0%	19%	81%	4%	15%	81%

Segment 8 is the northernmost portion of the byway, reaching the state border of New York. The views to the west along this segment are particularly vivid, offering expansive views of farmland and mountains in the distance. The Appalachian trail crosses the byway along this segment, and the Heaven Hill Farm Market and Garden Center is located here. The views are somewhat disrupted by power transmission towers to the west.



Segment 9

Roadway: CR 644 Vernon Crossing Rd

Boundaries: NJ 94 - Sand Hill Rd

Character: Hilly, recreation center, straightaway, distant peaks

CCW			CW		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
27%	60%	13%	0%	50%	50%

Note: CCW=Counterclockwise, CW=Clockwise

Among the positive elements on this segment are ridgeline views, wetlands, and the historic train station converted into a deli. The power lines and expansive parking lots along the roadway, as well as invasive phragmites, are drawbacks. While the athletic fields are a positive attribute, several participants pointed out that the fencing around the fields is unappealing.



Segment 10

Roadway: Sand Hill Rd

Boundaries: CR 644 Vernon Crossing Rd - McPeek Rd

Character: School, church, views, hilly

CCW			CW		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%

Note: CCW=Counterclockwise, CW=Clockwise

Segment 10 had the highest overall score in all categories. There are scenic, natural and uninterrupted views on either side of the roadway. The view to the east offers vistas of farmland and farm animals, the ski resort, ridge views, and snippets of the town in the distance. There was disagreement regarding whether or not the solar field on the east side detracts from the view.



Segment 11

Roadway: McPeck Rd

Boundaries: Sand Hill Rd - CR 517 McAfee Glenwood Rd

Character: Scattered homes, low traffic, hilly

CCW			CW		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
7%	60%	33%	0%	33%	67%

Note: CCW=Counterclockwise, CW=Clockwise

There are generally pleasant views along this segment in both directions. Among the identified positive attributes are the diverse plants and trees, a brief view of a pond on the north side of the road, and a nice red barn. Invasive phragmites were observed.



Segment 12

Roadway: CR 517 McAfee Glenwood Rd

Boundaries: McPeck Rd - NJ 94

Character: Historic buildings, residential development, golf course, views

CCW			CW		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
13%	67%	20%	0%	50%	50%

Note: CCW=Counterclockwise, CW=Clockwise

There is a steep hill along the segment, one good view of a pond, and excellent but obscured rock features in the woods. However, many houses along the corridor have unkempt yards and driveways, and there are invasive foliage species along the east side of the road. The overall score for this segment was affected by a lack of unity and intactness.



Segment 13

Roadway: NJ 94

Boundaries: CR 517 McAfee Glenwood Rd/ Mountain Creek Resort

Character: Railroad crossing, views, major ski resort

CCW			CW		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
0%	50%	50%	33%	33%	33%

Note: CCW=Counterclockwise, CW=Clockwise

This segment had both positive attributes and detractors. Among the highlights for this segment are views of open fields and mountains, barns, and a horse stable. Detractors that affected the overall score include a gas station and a large parking/vehicle storage lot across from the Mountain Creek Resort.



Segment 14

Roadway: NJ 94

Boundaries: Mountain Creek Resort/CR 515 Vernon Rd

Character: Ski resort, residential, commercial activity

CCW			CW		
Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
-	-/+	+	-	-/+	+
17%	83%	0%	44%	56%	0%

Note: CCW=Counterclockwise, CW=Clockwise

Segment 14 is characterized by heavy commercial development and the presence of Mountain Creek Resort. There is a nice view of a pond on the east side. The detractors along this segment include a boarded-up building on the west, expansive parking lots, and a gasoline station.



B **Institutional Survey**

Institutional Survey

As part of the Corridor Management Plan, the study team conducted an institutional survey of key stakeholder agencies and organizations. The purpose of the survey was four-fold: to better understand each agency’s interests regarding the byway, to learn about plans and policies that relate to the byway or may affect plan implementation, to hear their suggestions concerning places or programs of interest to the byway, and to identify any resources these organizations may be able to contribute to the implementation of the plan.

The institutional survey was conducted through individual interviews (both in-person and by telephone) designed to address specific questions to each agency and develop key information needed for the plan. The following table lists the agencies and organizations interviewed and highlights the topics/key points that emerged in these conversations.

Organization	Topics Discussed/Key Points
Vernon Township – Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most relevant plans and policies: Highlands Element of Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Element, Natural Resource Inventory • Areas where development could affect character of byway: limited--main locations would be Legends and McAfee areas; some potential for new hotels in future; constraints involving water service • Appalachian trail parking is a serious issue on Pochuck boardwalk side; would be ideal if more parking could be provided at Stairway to Heaven • Other concerns: Vernon’s loss of population; difficult transportation access to New York, Morristown
Vernon Township – Mayor’s Office, Recreation Dept., Greenway Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive of byway in concept, but do not support inclusion of Sand Hill Road and McPeek Road in the byway, due to speeding issues and concerns about potential for more traffic on these narrow roads • Provided information on plans for greenway/trail network; byway could provide access to this network • Working to attract entrepreneurs and unique establishments that could bring more visitors to Vernon (such as a brewery); goal of creating a walkable area with interesting shops • Planning to develop an Arts Walk
Hardyston Township – Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign ordinances: Township currently has a sign ordinance and does not permit off-premise advertising signs; development officer is proactive about removing unauthorized signs • Billboard prohibition: no current ordinance prohibiting billboards along the byway, but willing to consider adopting one

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardyston’s Highlands Preservation Area Master Plan Element calls for protecting and preserving the defining characteristics of scenic byways • Plans for re-use of former park-and-ride lot/restaurant site at NJ 23 and CR 515: no current plans; likely no objection to adding a kiosk there; there are some issues affecting continued use of the restaurant building as a restaurant, but it might have potential as a visitor’s center • Potential for pull-off areas along CR 515: would have no objection, and expects Watershed would also be amenable, but Highlands permitting process can be lengthy • Development projects or proposals underway that could affect the character of the byway: none; very limited development potential, with 10-acre lot averaging cluster zoning and entire area is within the Highlands Preservation Area • Status of cell phone tower at former municipal building: essential for cell service; municipality also receives significant leasing fees from the service provider • Suggests including Skylands Ice Rink on NJ 23 as a nearby feature of interest for the byway
Sussex County – Planning, Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of Strategic Growth Plan: the 2005 plan is still in effect; the 2014 update has not been adopted and serves only as a reference • County regulations other than Land Development Standards that could affect development along the byway: driveway standards are included in the Land Development Standards • Regulation of off-premise advertising signs: not permitted within the County ROW • County scenic roads program: no • Open space, recreation, or environmental conservation initiatives underway: County is working on two grant programs available to municipalities, one for trail construction and maintenance and the other for control of invasive species • Potential for pull-off areas along CR 515: would need further study • Potential aesthetic enhancements for road divider on CR 515 approaching Vernon Center: Vernon could initiate a project of this type through an MOU with the County • Potential for selective tree trimming or removal of invasive species in strategic locations along County roads: work would have to be coordinated with SCDPW roadside vegetation maintenance and in consideration of traffic safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other transportation initiatives on CR 515 or 517: none currently, an operations and safety scoping study was prepared some time ago for CR 515, but it did not advance • Heritage programs: Arts & Heritage Council holds an annual Arts & Heritage weekend in October with a tour destination in each municipality • Wallkill Watershed Management Group is a potential resource for invasive species projects • Sussex Co Birding Club is a resource for ecotourism
Highlands Council – Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vernon and Hardyston are both qualified to apply for planning grants for implementation of their conformance plans • Eligible types of grants include sustainable economic development plans, which can include tourism plans or market studies. A tourism plan could focus on eco-, agri-, or heritage tourism or a combination. • Agricultural retention plans are another type of planning grant the municipalities could apply for • Sussex County could apply for a tourism planning grant on behalf of the two byway municipalities • The Highlands Council is planning to undertake a larger-scale economic development plan for the entire Highlands Region • Pull-off areas: there is a Highlands exemption for transportation safety projects that do not increase capacity. In the Highlands Planning Area, an NJDEP permit is not needed for a pull-off.
Wawayanda State Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for future development of park facilities and programs: no significant changes planned • No current plans to add campsites, but is a long-term possibility • Birding and horseback riding have both increased recently; special activities include trail running • Ownership and maintenance arrangements of Appalachian Trail lands: NJDEP and the National Park Service manage it together through a complex arrangement; a previous MOU has expired and a new one is in progress that also involves the NY/NJ Trail Conference and FHWA • Park has sought to add an interpreter (naturalist or historian) to their staff for many years; this would add to the interpretive resources in the byway corridor • Barrett Road gate is opened on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to October 31. In early fall, this could be a way to link the park and byway for foliage visitors.
NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife, Northern Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of entrance from CR 515 and potential to use for byway kiosk: F&W is not opposed to adding a kiosk, however some of this property is leased by Mountain Creek and may not be available

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to ponds for fishing: only one small pond is accessible from the entrance on CR 515. The nicest area for recreation is Silver Lake, accessible by car from NJ 23.
<p>City of Newark – Newark Watershed Recreation Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential use of park-and-ride lot at NJ 94/CR 515 for byway parking area/kiosk: previously leased to NJ Transit; would likely require lease arrangement • Potential to develop small pull-off areas along CR 515: if these would encroach on Watershed land, it may be possible to handle through an easement • Targeted landscape management efforts on CR 515, such as removal of invasive species or selective tree trimming to open views: may require an MOU between Sussex County and the City of Newark • Contact for future inquiries is Kenya Travitt, Manager, travittk@ci.newark.nj.us

Corridor Fixtures Diagram

The study team conducted a detailed inventory of fixtures that affect the byway's scenic quality, such as commercial signs and billboards, utility towers, power lines, solar panels, and parking lots. The inventory was conducted based on the route previously proposed for the byway loop. The following diagram illustrates the findings of the inventory.

Segment 1

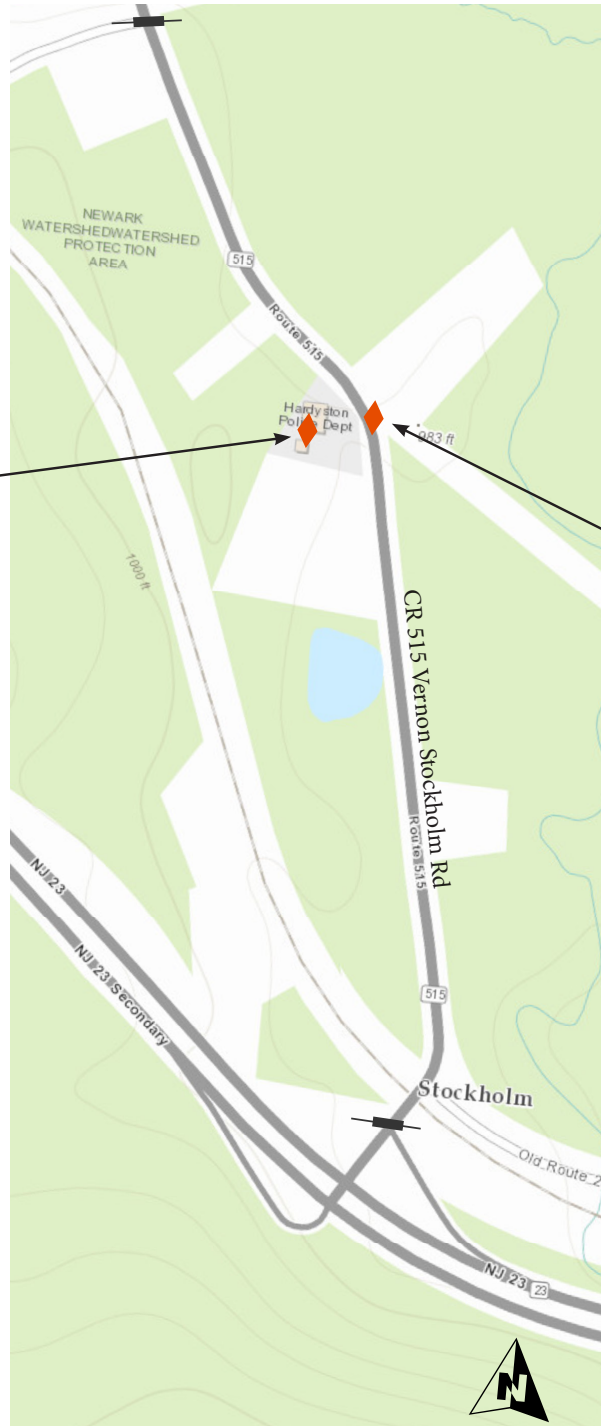
CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd
NJ 23 to Snufftown Rd

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)

Coordinates:

41.08655132, -74.51111164

Radio tower and utility poles
along this stretch detract from
the view



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:

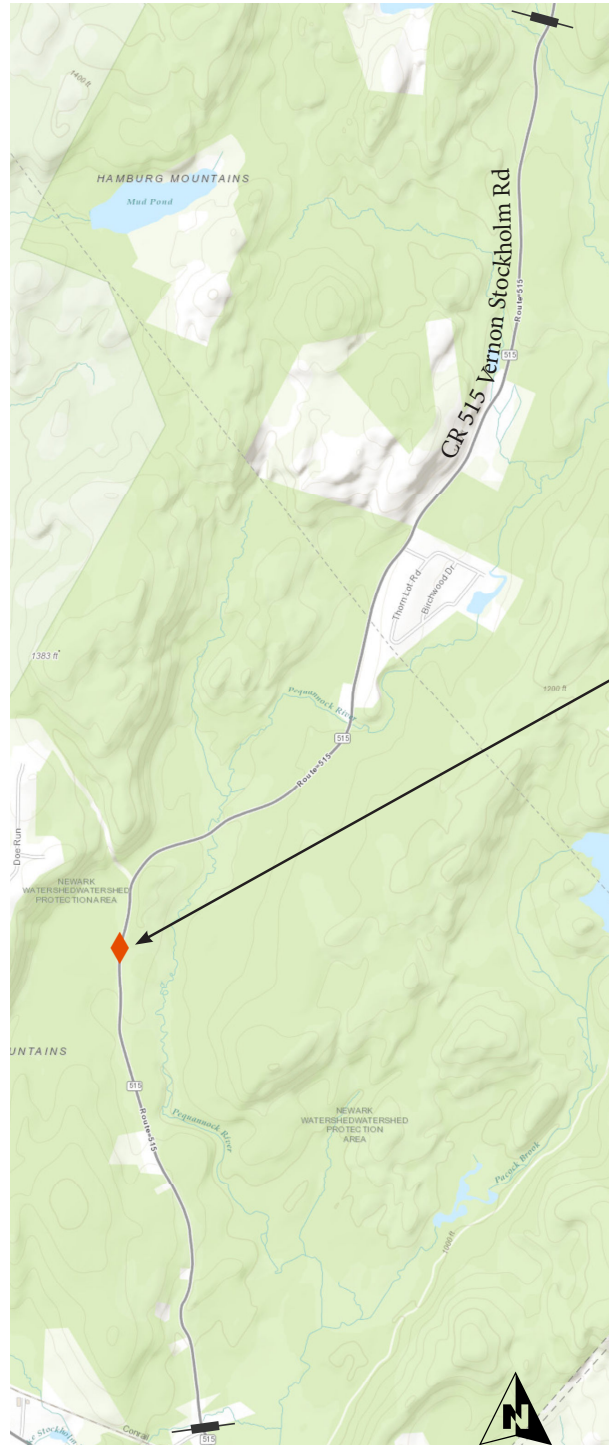
41.089178, -74.511942

Sign along the roadside

Segment 2

CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd
Snufftown Rd to Pequannock River Tributary

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates: 41.11072,
-74.518478

Prominent power lines visible
above the roadway

Segment 3

CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd
Pequannock River Tributary - Entrance to Hamburg Mountain WMA

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)

Segment 4

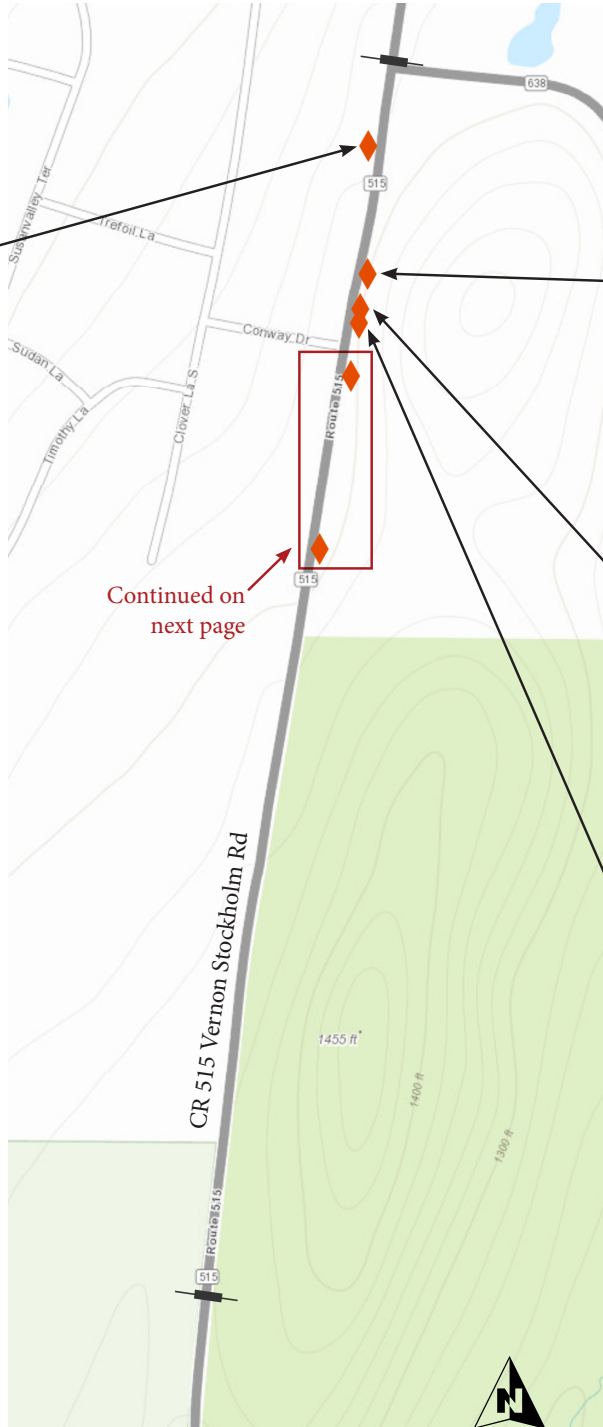
CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd
Hamburg Mountain WMA entrance to Highland Lakes Rd

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)

Coordinates:

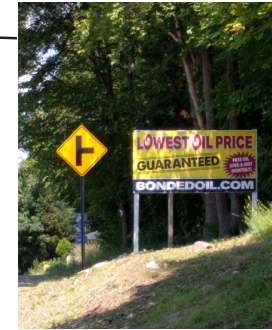
41.170605, -74.491295

Billboard and prominent power lines



Continued on next page

EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:

41.169752, -74.491301

Advertising sign



Coordinates:

41.169516, -74.491367

Advertising sign



Coordinates:

41.16942, -74.491379

Advertising sign

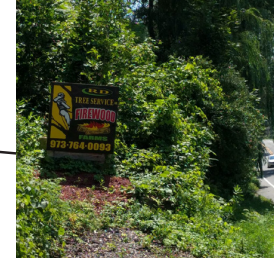
Segment 4

CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd
Hamburg Mountain WMA entrance to Highland Lakes Rd

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:

41.169069, -74.491445

Advertising sign



Coordinates:

41.167907, -74.491728

Advertising sign and stuffed toys

Segment 5

CR 515 Vernon Stockholm Rd Highland Lakes Rd to The Daily Bean Coffee Shop

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)

Coordinates:

41.190179, -74.485302

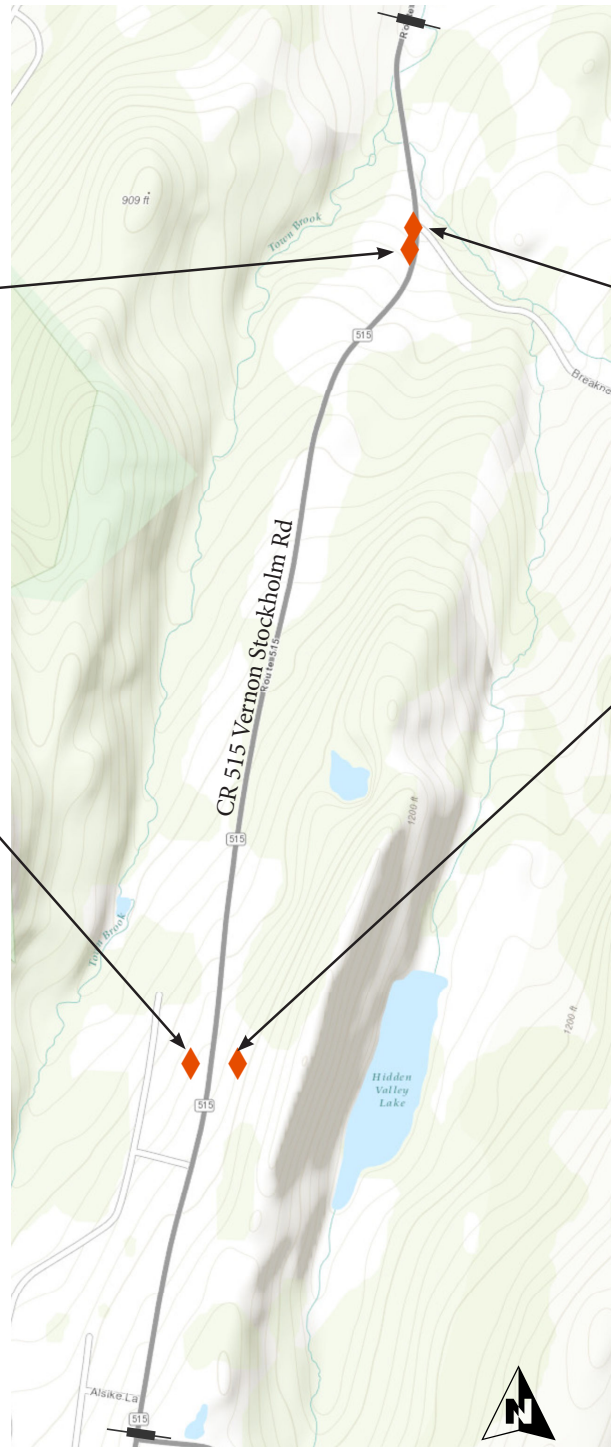
Prominent electrical substation adjacent to the roadway



Coordinates:

41.177158, -74.489952

Telephone radio towers in distance



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)

Coordinates:

41.190529, -74.485227

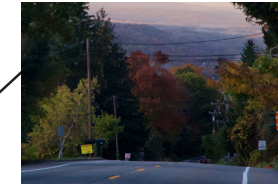
Powerlines above roadway



Coordinates:

41.177140, -74.489300

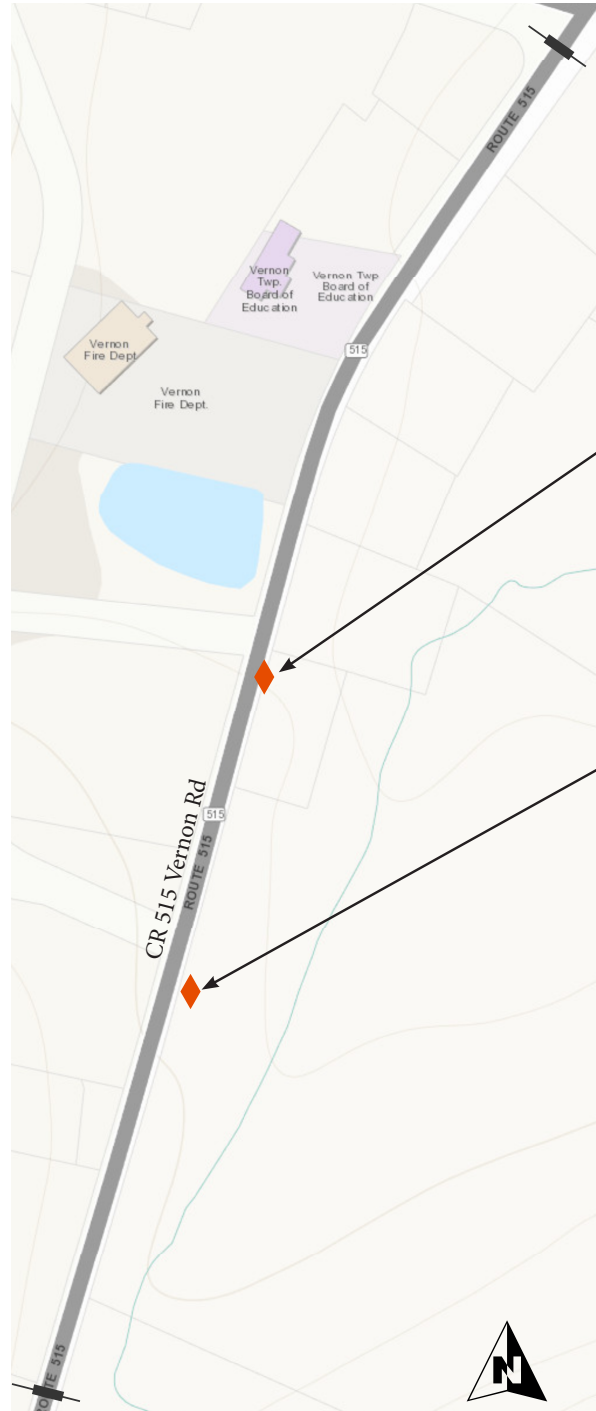
Prominent power lines



Segment 6

CR 515 Vernon Rd
The Daily Bean Coffee Shop to NJ 94

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:

41.196282, -74.484372

Gas station sign



Coordinates:

41.196282, -74.484372

Cluster of advertisements

Segment 7

NJ 94
CR 515 Vernon Rd to Butternut Dr

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:
41.206247, -74.471651
Cluster of business signs



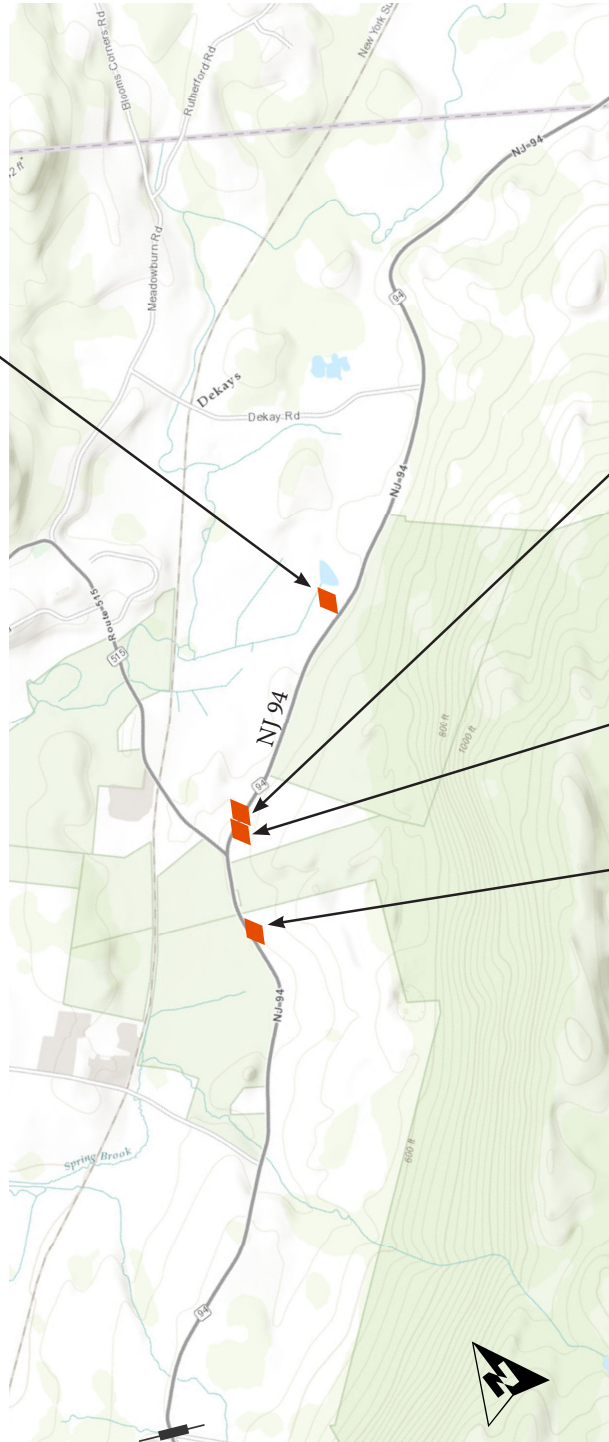
Coordinates:
41.198533, -74.482873
Cluster of regulatory signs

Segment 8

NJ 94 Butternut Dr to New York State Line

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)

Coordinates:
41.224093, -74.444915
Advertising sign



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:
41.220844, -74.453279
Cluster of advertisements



Coordinates:
41.220348, -74.453776
Advertising sign



Coordinates:
41.217568, -74.455847
Utility tower

Segment 9

CR 644 Vernon Crossing Rd
NJ 94 to Sand Hill Rd

SOUTH SIDE (EASTBOUND)

Coordinates:

41.208773, -74.485757

Expansive parking lot



NORTH SIDE (WESTBOUND)



Coordinates:

41.205219, -74.481863

Power lines

Segment 10

Sand Hill Rd
CR 644 Vernon Crossing Rd to McPeck Rd

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)

EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)



Coordinates:
41.213827, -74.497140
Solar panels

Segment 11

McPeck Rd
Sand Hill Rd to CR 517 McAfee Glenwood Rd

SOUTH SIDE (EASTBOUND)

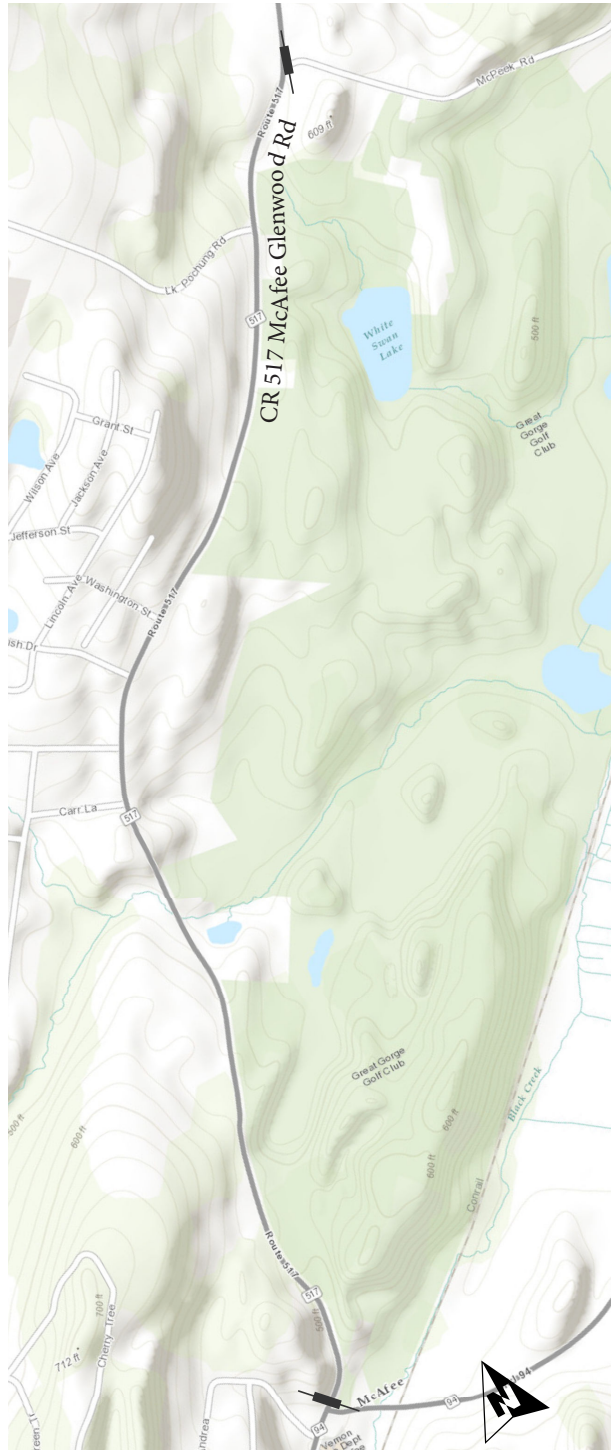


NORTH SIDE (WESTBOUND)

Segment 12

CR 517 McAfee Glenwood Rd
McPeck Rd to NJ 94

WEST SIDE (SOUTHBOUND)



EAST SIDE (NORTHBOUND)

Segment 13

NJ 94

CR 517 McAfee Glenwood Rd/Mountain Creek Resort

NORTH SIDE (WESTBOUND)

Coordinates:

41.179142, -74.532015

Expansive parking lot



Coordinates:

41.179079, -74.539766

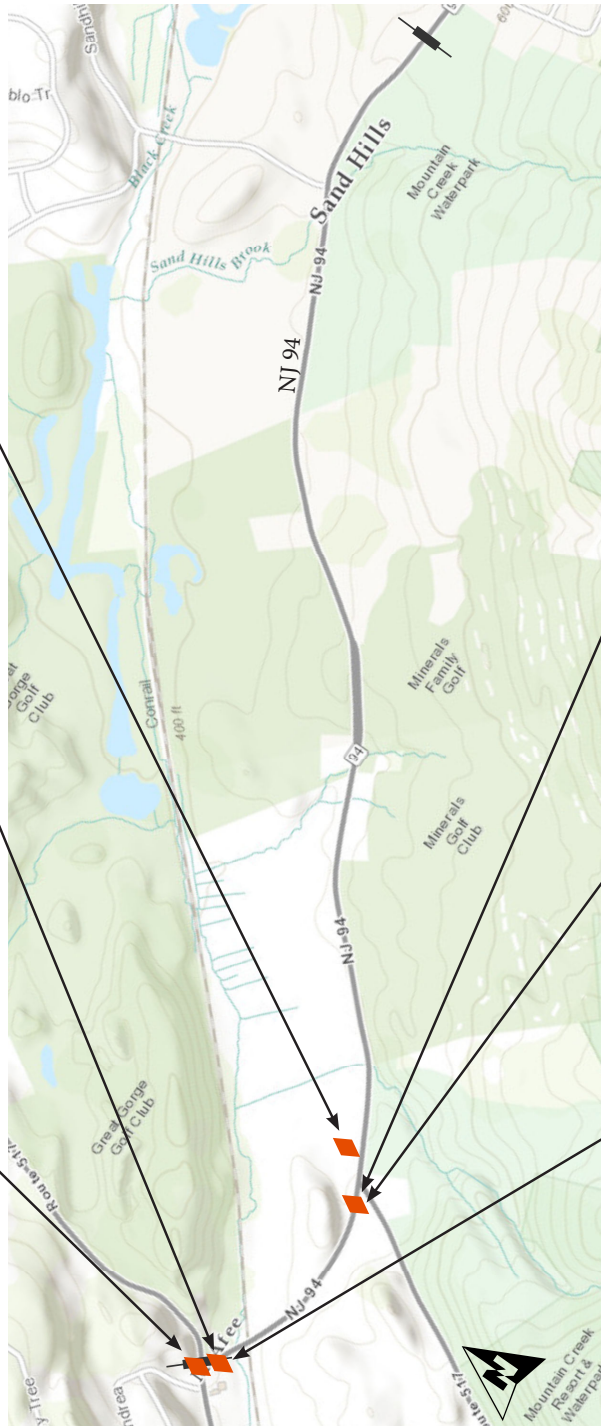
Cluster of regulatory signs



Coordinates:

41.179079, -74.539766

Prominent gas station sign



SOUTH SIDE (EASTBOUND)

Coordinates:

41.178256, -74.533233

Cluster of regulatory signs



Coordinates:

41.178256, -74.533233

Prominent gas station sign



Coordinates:

41.178718, -74.539315

Cluster of regulatory signs



Segment 14

NJ 94 Mountain Creek Resort to CR 515 Vernon Rd

NORTH SIDE (WESTBOUND)

Coordinates:
41.199314, -74.485837
Cluster of business signs



Coordinates:
41.198062, -74.489194
Cluster of business signs



Coordinates:
41.191691, -74.502481
Expansive parking lot and utility tower



SOUTH SIDE (EASTBOUND)

Coordinates:
41.198392, -74.488061
Cluster of business signs



Coordinates:
41.192094, -74.497207
Dilapidated business sign



Vernon Township Zoning Map

**Mountain Creek Redevelopment Area
Bulk Standards Per
Ordinance # 06-35**

It shall be set back a minimum distance of ten (10) feet from any public right-of-way, there shall be no required minimum setback, except as may be required for emergency access and fire safety.

As modified by this Ordinance, the bulk criteria of the CR zone district contained in the Development Ordinance as currently in effect as of the date of adoption of this Ordinance shall apply and is incorporated herein by reference.

Ordinance # 06-35 for a more detailed description of the bulk requirements.

At the easterly corner of Block 190, Lot 11 being above the tree line is in the present area.

**McAfee Village Commercial/Resort Redevelopment Area (MVCR)
Bulk Standards Per
Ordinance # 08-03**

It shall be set back a minimum distance of ten (10) feet from any public right-of-way and set back a minimum of thirty (30) feet is required.

Ordinance # 08-03 for a more detailed description of the bulk requirements.

**McAfee Village Mixed Use Redevelopment Area (MVMU)
Bulk Standards Per
Ordinance # 08-04**

It shall be set back a minimum distance of ten (10) feet from any public right-of-way and set back a minimum of fifteen (15) feet is required. Otherwise, there is no required minimum setback, except as may be required for emergency access safety.

Ordinance # 08-04 for a more detailed description of the bulk requirements.



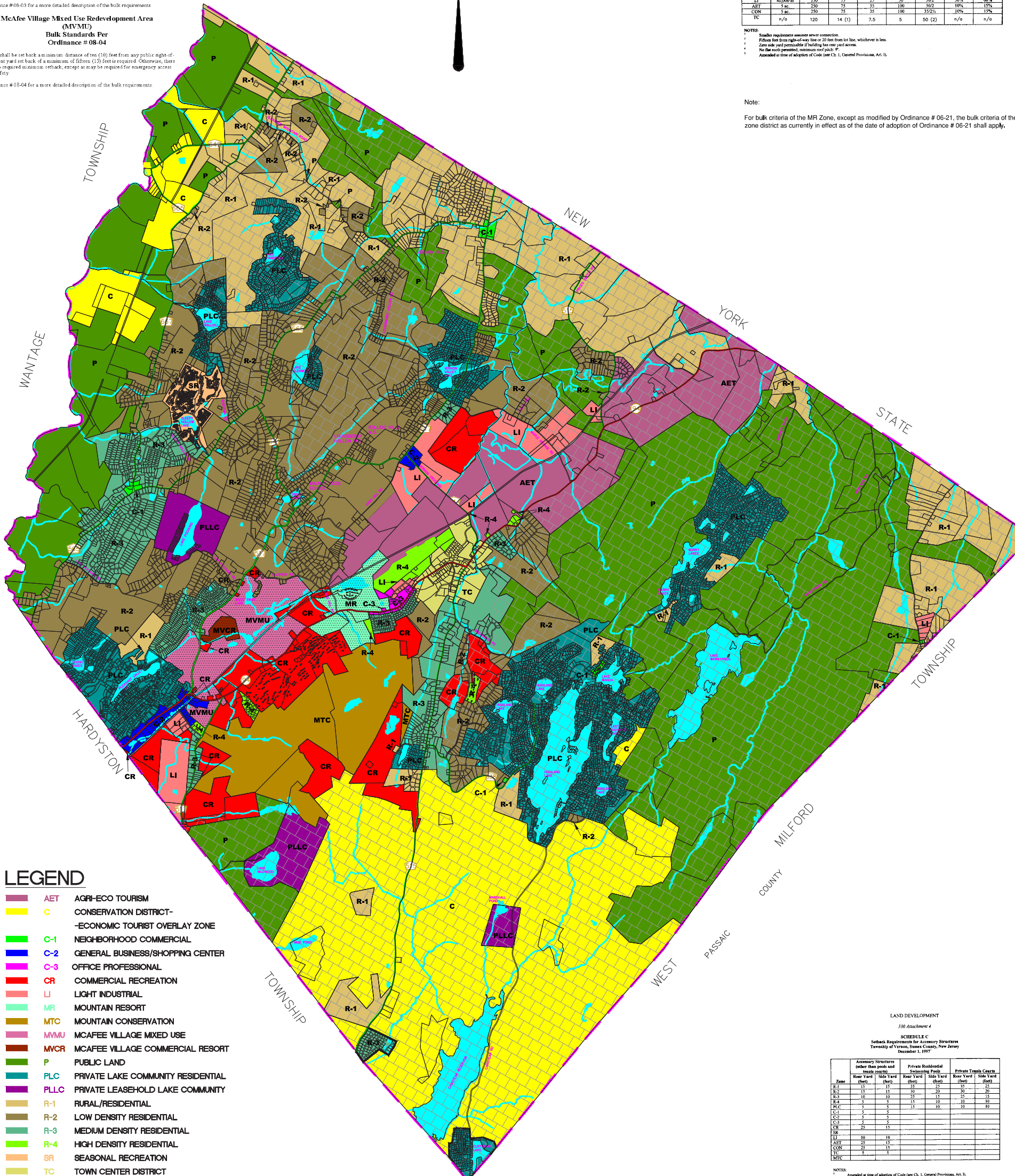
LAND DEVELOPMENT
330 Attachment 3

**SCHEDULE B
Bulk and Yard Requirements**
Township of Vernon, Sussex County, New Jersey
[Amended 12-13-2004 by Ord. No. 04-39; 9-26-2005 by Ord. No. 05-21]

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Area (square feet or acre)	Minimum Lot Width (feet)	Minimum Front Yard Setback (feet)	Minimum Side Yard Setback (feet)	Minimum Rear Yard Setback (feet)	Maximum Building Height (feet/height)	Maximum Building Coverage (percent)	Maximum Lot Coverage (percent)
R-1	5 ac.	250	75	25	100	35/21	10%	15%
R-2	3 ac.	200	75	25	75	35/21	10%	25%
R-3	10,000 sf	125	50	15	50	35/21	20%	30%
R-4	10,000 sf	100	50	15	50	35/21	20%	30%
PLC	10,000 sf	100	40	10	25	35/21	25%	35%
C-1	20,000 sf	100	25	10	20	30/2	35%	75%
C-2	50,000 sf	125	40	15	40	30/2	30%	60%
C-3	40,000 sf	150	75	20	50	35/3	25%	50%
CR	10 ac.	250	100	100	100	30/2	10%	25%
SR	40 ac.	250	100	50	60	30/2	10%	25%
LI	40,000 sf	150	75	25	50	30/2	10%	60%
AET	5 ac.	250	75	25	100	30/2	10%	15%
TC	n/a	120	14 (1)	7.5	5	50 (2)	n/a	n/a

NOTES:
1. Smaller requirement always governs.
2. Fifteen feet from right-of-way line or 20 feet from lot line, whichever is less.
3. Zone side yard permissible if building has rear yard access.
4. No lot split permitted; minimum roof pitch 9%.
5. Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

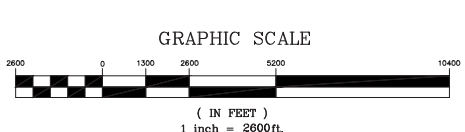
Note:
For bulk criteria of the MR Zone, except as modified by Ordinance # 06-21, the bulk criteria of the zone district as currently in effect as of the date of adoption of Ordinance # 06-21 shall apply.



- LEGEND**
- AET AGRI-ECO TOURISM
 - C CONSERVATION DISTRICT-ECONOMIC TOURIST OVERLAY ZONE
 - C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
 - C-2 GENERAL BUSINESS/SHOPPING CENTER
 - C-3 OFFICE PROFESSIONAL
 - CR COMMERCIAL RECREATION
 - LI LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
 - MR MOUNTAIN RESORT
 - MTC MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION
 - MVMU MCAFFEE VILLAGE MIXED USE
 - MVCR MCAFFEE VILLAGE COMMERCIAL RESORT
 - P PUBLIC LAND
 - PLC PRIVATE LAKE COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL
 - PLLC PRIVATE LEASEHOLD LAKE COMMUNITY
 - R-1 RURAL/RESIDENTIAL
 - R-2 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 - R-3 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 - R-4 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 - SR SEASONAL RECREATION
 - TC TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

APPROXIMATE HIGHLANDS PRESERVATION AREA
(DOWNLOADED FROM THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL WEB SITE, UNDER GIS DATA DOWNLOADS, ON 1/21/09.
USER SHOULD REFER TO THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL FOR FINAL DETERMINATION)

REDEVELOPMENT AREAS



REV.	DATE	DRAWN BY	DESCRIPTION
5	2/7/17	CLS	CORRECTED ZONE DESIGNATIONS FOR VARIOUS LOTS
4	5/13/16	CLS	CORRECTED BOUNDARY OF C-3 & R-4 ZONE DISTRICTS PER ORDINANCE #16-14 (HPA)
3	3/23/15	CLS	CORRECTED BOUNDARY OF AET & TC ZONE DISTRICTS PER ORDINANCE #15-01 (HPA)
2	9/9/14	CLS	CORRECTED ZONE DESIGNATION FOR BLOCK 184 LOT 18.01 PROPERTY (HPA)
1	12/14/12	JJH	REPLACED TC & VTC ZONES WITH TCD ZONE
0	1/22/09	JJH	ZONING MAP ADOPTED ON 2/26/2009, EFFECTIVE DATE 3/16/09, PER ORDINANCE #09-04

Notes:
This map supersedes the map entitled "Zoning Map", prepared by Heyer, Gruel & Associates, adopted December 14, 1998, and revised May 8, 2000. (Ordinance #01-02)

- REFERENCES**
- 1. TOWNSHIP TAX MAPS.
 - 2. MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT, PREPARED BY MASER CONSULTING ON 7-14-2004.
 - 3. ZONING MAP PREPARED BY HEYER, GRUEL & ASSOCIATES, PA, LAST REVISED 5/8-2000.
 - 4. FINANCES AS STATED HEREON.

LAND DEVELOPMENT
330 Attachment 4

**SCHEDULE C
Setback Requirements for Accessory Structures**
Township of Vernon, Sussex County, New Jersey
December 1, 1997

Zone	Accessory Structures (other than pools and tennis courts)		Private Residential Swimming Pools		Private Tennis Courts	
	Rear Yard (feet)	Side Yard (feet)	Rear Yard (feet)	Side Yard (feet)	Rear Yard (feet)	Side Yard (feet)
R-1	15	15	15	20	15	25
R-2	15	15	30	30	20	20
R-3	10	10	15	15	20	15
R-4	5	5	15	10	10	10
PLC	5	5	15	10	10	10
C-1	5	5				
C-2	5	5				
C-3	5	5				
CR	25	15				
SR	10	10				
LI	25	15				
AET	25	15				
CON	25	15				
TC	5	5				
MTC						

NOTES:
1. Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

HPA HAROLD E. PELLOW & ASSOCIATES, IN
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION NO. 24GA27959300
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
17 PLAINS ROAD, AUGUSTA, NEW JERSEY 07822-2009
TELEPHONE 973-948-6463 FAX 973-948-2916

**Township of Vernon
Engineering Department**
Louis M. Kneip, PE, PP, CME John J. Hanlon, LS
21 Church Street P.O. Box 340 Vernon Township, New Jersey

ZONING MAP

TOWNSHIP OF VERNON SUSSEX COUNTY NEW JERSEY

PROJECT NAME: ZONING MAP
DWG NAME: ZONING MAP.DWG SCALE: AS SHC
DATE: 1/22/09 DESIGN BY: JJH
SHEET NUMBER: 1 of 1

E Website Outline

Western Highlands Scenic Byway Website

- a. Home Page
 - i. Large photo(s) and quick intro; custom Byway video if available

- b. About the Byway
 - i. Key Features (focus on Historic and Recreational assets)
 - ii. Map (interactive is ideal, with clickable points, panning/zooming function, identification of destinations, restrooms, etc.)
 - iii. Virtual Tour
 - iv. NJDOT Scenic Byway Program (with [link](#))
 - v. Frequently Asked Questions

- c. Choose Your Byway Adventure
 - i. Themed Tours

Introduce and illustrate the guided audio tours. Encourage users to download to mobile device before traveling the Byway, due to spotty cell service.

 - **Heritage Tourism:** Stockholm Methodist Church, Price’s Switch Schoolhouse, Black Creek Site, mining sites such as McAfee Limestone Kiln, Mastodon Lake (general area)
 - **Four Seasons of Recreation:** opportunities for downhill skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing, cross-country skiing, kayaking, horseback riding, cycling, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, golfing, motorcycling and shops that support these activities
 - **Agritourism:** Heaven Hill Farm, Vernon Valley Farm, Meadowburn Farms (open for events only), Hinchman-Rickey Farm, and small roadside vendors. Highlight the dairy, honey, garlic, meat/poultry, and other locally grown resources of the byway.
 - **Eco-tourism:** hiking, photography, birdwatching, butterfly walks; Stairway to Heaven, Pinwheel Vista, Appalachian Trail, Wawayanda State Park, Walkill National Wildlife Refuge
 - **Family Fun:** Treescape Aerial Adventure Park, Crystal Springs Resort, Mountain Creek Water Park, Skylands Ice World, easy hikes, picnic areas

 - ii. Four Seasons of the Byway

Unique features/considerations/imagery of each season.

 - iii. Earn Your Byway Badge!

Introduction of the chosen family-friendly branded byway mascot and tourism incentive, such as a passport, that supports local businesses.

- d. Getting Here

Links to transportation options (bus and rail service, car sharing, etc.)

- e. Dine, Play, and Stay on the Byway
 - i. Dining and Picnic Purveyors
 - Links to businesses and descriptions of options
 - Potential coupons or discount codes for “Byway Business Partners”

- ii. Lodging
 - Links to businesses and description of options (hotels, B&Bs, camping, glamping)
 - iii. Entertainment
 - Links and descriptions of potential venues for weddings, art shows, fairs, festivals, concerts, etc.
 - iv. Retail
 - Outfitters that support local recreation and eco-tourism opportunities
 - Small business-focused
- f. Let's Connect!
- Contact info
 - Contact form
 - Social media links

Sample Brochure Design

This sample bi-fold design is intended as a starting point for a promotional Western Highlands Scenic Byway brochure, to be printed and distributed at strategic locations. The brochure will need to be finalized with actual links to the future website and social media; the links shown here are placeholders.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Western Highlands is North Jersey's Best Kept Secret!

- ✓ Indulge in four seasons of recreation, including skiing, snowboarding, hiking, kayaking, golfing, and more!
- ✓ Vernon, the heart of the Byway, is a designated Appalachian Trail Community™.
- ✓ Explore the area's rich heritage, from the Black Creek Site to world-famous mining museums.
- ✓ Nature lovers will find an astounding variety of native species!
- ✓ Purchase fresh local honey, grassfed beef, or sunflowers from the many working farms.
- ✓ From the aerial treescape park to farm visits, family-friendly activities abound.



Source: FHI

Stay tuned for upcoming events, get travel inspiration, and share your Byway selfies at:

 facebook.com/westernhighlands

 [@westernhighlands](https://instagram.com/westernhighlands)

Download guided audio tours:

 westernhighlands.com

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

SCENIC BYWAY



Source: Eleanor Bartnick

For more information, contact
Vernon Historical Society
973-764-6545

The Western Highlands Byway area is known by its stunning landscapes, working farms, family-friendly and recreational opportunities, and historic assets. Spend some time exploring this fantastic region!



WESTERN HIGHLANDS SCENIC BYWAY



Source: WSP

Explore Native American heritage at the Black Creek site, where human settlements date back a whopping 10,000 years.



Source: Teresa Baker

Lace up those hiking boots! Explore the peaceful sights and sounds of the Appalachian Trail or Wawayanda State Park.



Source: Audubon Society

Download a guided audio tour for tips on where to spot a red-tailed hawk and other native species.



Source: Mountain Creek

Resorts such as Mountain Creek provide enjoyable lodging and a range of experiences, from golfing to snowboarding to spas.



Source: Heaven Hill Farm

Bring the kids to seasonal events, such as the Heaven Hill corn maze during the Annual Pumpkin Festival.

Declaration and Resolutions of Support

**Declaration of Acceptance of the
Corridor Management Plan
For the
Western Highlands Scenic Byway**

Let it be known that, I, Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, do on this day, accept the Corridor Management Plan for the Western Highlands Scenic Byway as in compliance with the second step of the two step process for becoming a New Jersey Scenic Byway.

In accordance with the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program, a Corridor Management Plan was prepared with participation of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Committee which invited Hardyston and Vernon Townships, Sussex County, and other interested stakeholders along the Byway to participate in the process. The Corridor Management Plan includes strategies to preserve, protect and promote intrinsic qualities of the byway through actions that are not regulatory or otherwise mandated by the Plan. A resolution of support has been received from Sussex County who has jurisdiction of County Route 515, County Route 517 and County Route 644 along the byway. Successful implementation of the Plan will depend on cooperation, collaboration and support of all stakeholders involved with the Western Highlands Scenic Byway.

Let a copy of this Declaration be submitted to the New Jersey Division of the Federal Highway Administration as proof of our dedication to protecting scenic byways in New Jersey.



Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Commissioner, NJDOT



Date



**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS SCENIC BYWAY
CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

WHEREAS, in accordance with the New Jersey Scenic Byway Program, the Western Highlands Scenic Byway was designated as a State Scenic Byway in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the official name of this byway is the Western Highlands Scenic Byway; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon Township Historical Society, with participation by the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Committee and the assistance of a professional consulting team, has completed a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Committee invited Hardyston and Vernon Townships, Sussex County and other interested stakeholders along the Byway to participate in the process; and

WHEREAS, a Resolution to Support the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan was received from Sussex County which is the agency that has jurisdiction over County Route 515, County Route 517 and County Route 644 along the byway; and

WHEREAS, administration of the byway, further requires a continuing commitment on the part of all participants, involving the establishment of a non-profit Tourism Council to oversee its long-term promotion and assist with other strategies and actions; and

WHEREAS, the Western Highlands Scenic Byway and its Corridor will support the Hardyston and Vernon Townships, Sussex County and the NJ Highlands' many historic, environmental and recreational resources; and

WHEREAS, two rounds of public meeting opportunities were conducted at important planning milestones to explain the Corridor Management Plan and obtain input from the general public; and

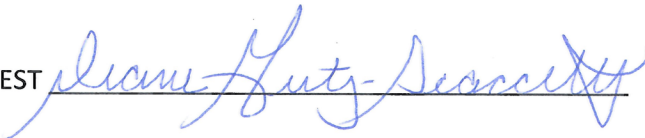
WHEREAS, the Corridor Management Plan includes strategies to preserve, protect and promote intrinsic qualities of the byway through actions that are not regulatory or otherwise mandated by the Plan; and

WHEREAS, successful implementation of the Plan depends on cooperation, collaboration and support of all stakeholders within the corridor of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway; and

WHEREAS, *the New Jersey Department of Transportation* wishes to express its support for the concept of a Scenic Byway and its commitment to collaborate in the process necessary for its implementation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, that the Department expresses its support of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan and its intention to participate in future implementation strategies described in the Plan.

ATTEST



DATE

10/11/18

**RESOLUTION RE: SUPPORT FOR THE CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN
OF WESTERN HIGHLANDS SCENIC BYWAY LOCATED
IN VERNON TOWNSHIP AND HARDYSTON TOWNSHIP**

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey established the New Jersey Scenic Byways Programs as part of a larger national program in 1991; and

WHEREAS, in New Jersey, the Department of Transportation leads the Scenic Byways Program, which provides a framework for communities to create a management strategy and to develop plans that balance development, conservation, tourism, and economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has authorized the creation of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway (hereinafter "Byway"); and

WHEREAS, through a Resolution entitled, "Reaffirming Support for the Creation of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway Along County Route 515 In Hardyston Township and County Routes 515, 644 and 517, and State Highway 94 in Vernon Township," adopted March 14, 2018, the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders (hereinafter "BCF") supported creation of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway; and

WHEREAS, the Byway Advisory Committee has developed the Scenic Byways' Corridor Management Plan (hereinafter "CMP"), and the Committee included members of the Vernon Township Historical Society, Wawayanda State Park, NY-NJ Trail Conference, the Center for Creative Placemaking, Sussex County Division of Planning and Economic Development and Vernon Chamber of Commerce, with assistance from New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Study Team from consultants known as WSP and FHI; and

WHEREAS, the CMP includes strategies to preserve, protect and promote the intrinsic qualities of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway through actions that are not regulatory or otherwise mandated by the CMP; and

WHEREAS, public meetings were conducted in Vernon Township and a presentation was made on July 25, 2018, at the BCF meeting to explain the CMP and to obtain input from the general public; and

WHEREAS, the Western Highlands region of Hardyston and Vernon Townships is growing as a tourist destination and possesses numerous natural, historic, cultural, agricultural, and scenic assets, access to which is enhanced by the promotion of the Byway; and

WHEREAS, successful implementation of the CMP depends on cooperation, collaboration and support of Sussex County, Hardyston and Vernon Townships, New Jersey and regional authorities along the Western Highlands Scenic Byway; and

WHEREAS, the main byway corridor includes the segment of Sussex County Route 515 between NJ Route 23 and NJ Route 94 and the byway loop includes a portion of Sussex County Route 517 and Sussex County Route 644; and


WHEREAS, the BCF recognizes the importance of the Scenic Byway Program requirement that roadway jurisdictions maintain and replace as needed the byway wayfinding signs that will be provided by the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the on-going use and enjoyment of the Byway by the general public.

WHEREAS, this responsibility will be more specifically defined and memorialized through a future agreement between the BCF and the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders affirms its support for the Western Highlands Scenic Byway, provides support for the Corridor Management Plan, and expresses its intention to support future implementation strategies described in the CMP; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the NJDOT, Office of Landscape Architecture, 1035 Parkway Avenue, P.O. Box 600, Trenton, NJ 08625; Municipal Clerk, Hardyston Township, 149 Wheatsworth Road, Suite A, Hardyston, NJ 07419; and Municipal Clerk, Vernon Township, 21 Church Street, Vernon, NJ 07462.

Certified as a true copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders on the 26th day of September, 2018.



 Teresa Lyons, Clerk
 Board of Chosen Freeholders
 County of Sussex

RECORD OF VOTE						
FREEHOLDER	AYE	NAY	ABST	ABS	MOVE	SEC
Graham	✓				✓	
Lazzaro	✓					✓
Petillo	✓					
Rose	✓					
Yardley	✓					

ABST - Abstain
 MOVE - Resolution Moved
 ABS - Absent
 SEC - Resolution Seconded

TOWNSHIP OF HARDYSTON

RESOLUTION #38-18

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE
WESTERN HIGHLANDS SCENIC BYWAY
CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Township of Hardyston expressed support for the establishment of the Western Highlands Scenic Byway in Resolution #55-10, adopted July 6, 2010; and

Whereas, the Western Highlands Scenic Byway was designated a State Scenic Byway by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation in 2014; and

Whereas, development of a Corridor Management Plan for the Western Highlands Scenic Byway is required for continued participation in the New Jersey Department of Transportation Scenic Byways Program; and

Whereas, a Scenic Byway Committee and professional consultant team have completed a Corridor Management Plan for the Western Highlands Scenic Byway with input and support from local and regional stakeholders; and

Whereas, the Corridor Management Plan is to be used as a tool to properly administer the Byway vision and goals to protect, enhance, and promote the byway's intrinsic qualities, providing voluntary means for residents and visitors alike to explore and share in this area's rich heritage and recreational assets; and

Whereas, the recommendations contained in the Corridor Management Plan offer the byway host communities of Hardyston and Vernon opportunities for increased tourism, economic development, and potential funding assistance for the maintenance, marketing, stewardship and roadside improvements of the proposed byway,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Hardyston, in the County of Sussex, and State of New Jersey that the Township of Hardyston supports the purpose and intent of the Corridor Management Plan for the Western Highlands Scenic Byway.

I hereby certify the above to be a true and accurate copy of a resolution adopted by the Hardyston Township Council on August 22, 2018.


Jane Bakalarczyk, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk

WESTERN HIGHLANDS
SCENIC BYWAY
CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

