

Annex A: Marketing and Signing the Byway

An annex to the 2016-2026 Corridor Management Plan: Connecticut State Route 169 National Scenic Byway



Cover photo: Jim Larkin (NECCOG). Photo modified to show additional signage

All other photos used in this document were taken by NECCOG

Plan Annex A: Marketing and Signing the Byway

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Overview

Applicability and Intent

This annex is a permanent addendum to the 2016-2026 Corridor Management Plan: Connecticut State Route 169 National Scenic Byway (“the Plan”). It serves multiple purposes. First, to establish and control the use of the branding elements of the Connecticut State Route 169 National Scenic Byway (“the byway”); second, to make recommendations toward the creation of a future marketing strategy; and third, to suggest a program for directional signage in the byway corridor. Positioning the byway as an economic driver will require a coordinated effort by NECCOG, a standing committee that represents local economic interests, local governments, and non-profit, public, and quasi-public organizations such as The Last Green Valley Inc. and Connecticut’s Eastern Regional Tourism District.

Marketing Committee and Marketing Plan

The Plan recommends that NECCOG seek to develop, with assistance from a consultant, a marketing plan that will allow the byway to be positioned as an economic driver for not only its corridor, but its greater region. A regularly meeting marketing committee will be essential to planning and implementing these efforts. Ideally, the committee will be represent a cross-section of the economic interests of the byway corridor—those that possess the local knowledge and business experience necessary to see the true potential of economic development through tourism, branding, and partnership, centered around Route 169.

Signs

Signing a National Scenic Byway is fundamental to its marketing, branding, and success as an economic generator. Signage also creates greater local awareness, which leads to increased community pride and buy-in of preservation efforts. Currently, no signs exist on Route 169 identifying the road as a National Scenic Byway. This annex to the Plan presents general recommendations for positioning signage in a way that does not detract from the road’s character but brings attention to its special designation.

Logo

Alternatives for an official logo for the Connecticut State Route 169 National Scenic Byway (*see right*) were developed by designer Brown Bear Creative. In consultation with the Scenic Route 169 Advisory Committee, **Alternative A** (*see far right*) was chosen to be the official logo for the byway and to be used in future signage efforts.

Parties interested in using the logo are encouraged to contact NECCOG (www.neccog.org).

Dimensions and Modifications

When recreating the logo, it must adhere to its original dimensions (*see right*). No modifications to the size or color of the logo are allowed.

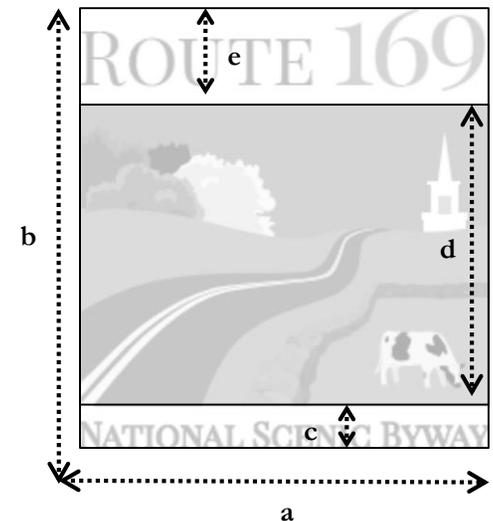
Format

When recreating the logo, the preferred image file format is Portable Network Graphic (“.png” or “.PNG” file extensions).



APPROX. RATIOS OF LOGO COMPONENTS

a : a	a : b	a : c	a : d	a : e
1 : 1	0.93 : 1	1 : 0.10	1 : 0.73	1 : 0.24



Marketing Plan Guidance

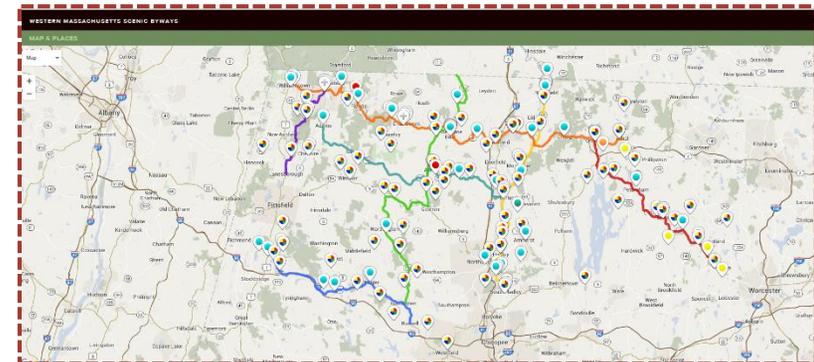
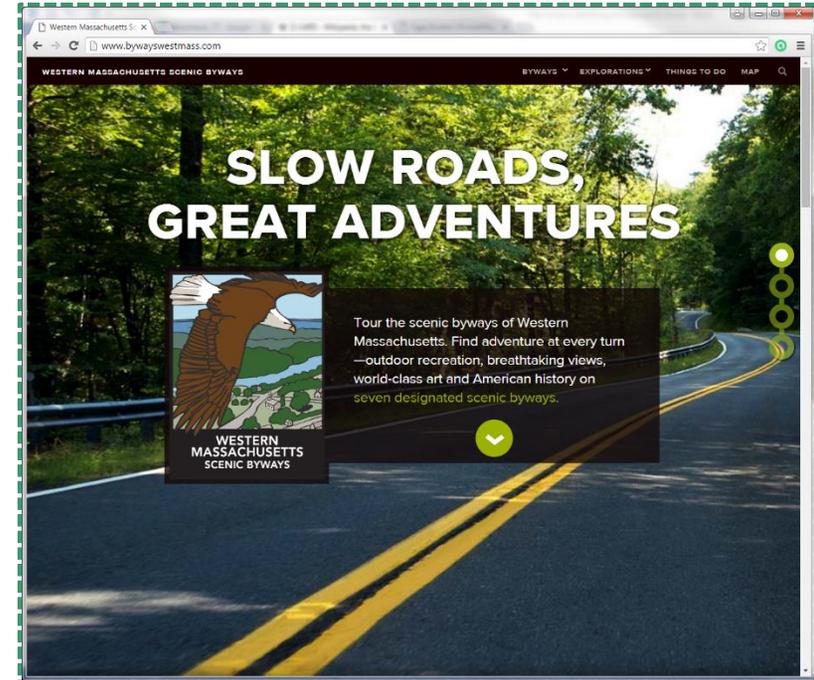
The goal of a marketing plan should be to give *specific* direction to marketing efforts taken by NECCOG and a regularly meeting marketing committee, in coordination with one or more of the following groups: The Last Green Valley, Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, and Eastern Regional Tourism District (Mystic Country). A marketing plan would include strategies for advertising the byway and positioning the byway and its existing businesses and destinations as drivers of tourism.

General Scope

A marketing plan for the Connecticut State Route 169 National Scenic Byway should seek to realize the byway's potential for economic development that capitalizes off its existing resources and character.

Name

The full name of the byway, Connecticut State Route 169 National Scenic Byway is considerably longer than most other National Scenic Byways. The name is seven words and 49 characters-long, including spaces. Although the Scenic Route 169 Advisory Committee had discussed potential name changes, it was decided that additional attention should be given to a potential name change.



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Web Presence

It may often be the case that drivers of the byway will be seeking information on-the-go. A dedicated and mobile-ready website should be developed that will include all or some of the following features:

- Use a short and recognizable URL (e.g. www.Route169.com)
- House any relevant visitor information pertaining to recreation, dining, shopping, museums, events, and nearby attractions, and lodging (local bed & breakfasts and nearby hotels)
- Show a dynamic map of the corridor with places of interest highlighted (*see image on previous page*)
- Contain a photo gallery
- Contain sample itineraries for different seasons and interests
- Promote special offers at area businesses
- Link to dedicated social media accounts

Social Media

Other scenic byways have had success using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest. It should be the intent of dedicated social media accounts to complement the information sharing ability of the byway website but also provide a platform for news and photo sharing, and promotion. More importantly, however, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are spaces for user-generated content and information sharing, with friends and followers, related to a user's personal experience with the byway.



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Maps and Brochures

Whereas travel brochures were once the primary medium for tourism information, it is likely that most visitors will be seeking out information from online sources. Brochures, however, may still have a play a role as a primary information source, a map, a way to direct travelers to a website, or a travel keepsake. In all cases, a brochure should be concise, easy to read, and easy to carry. Products such as the Z-CARD® by PocketMedia® meet this end and are becoming increasingly popular, especially as travel maps.

Marketing Partnerships

It may become the case that businesses, museums, events, and other attractions along and near the byway will wish to use the byway logo as a means of improving their own tourism image through advertising and promotions, business signs, or websites. In this way, the byway logo would allow these attractions in the corridor, and greater region, to unite under a “place brand”. The effect of such a partnership would be twofold: not only would businesses and other attractions benefit from increased recognition by tourists, but it would allow the byway logo to proliferate.



Signage

Purpose

Ensuring a positive user experience is fundamental to realizing a National Scenic Byway’s tourism potential. Whether signaling the beginning of a byway, directing drivers to a byway at key entry points, or confirming to drivers that they are touring the correct route, appropriate, attractive, and well placed signs are not only essential guides to drivers, but can reinforce a byway’s sense of place and driver’s perceived quality of experience.

To local champions of scenic, historic, and environmental preservation, a secondary benefit of a byway signage program may be increased community support for efforts to maintain and enhance the byway’s important intrinsic qualities.

Terminal Signs

Currently, the byway’s north and south terminals are signed with blue “Scenic Road” signs used on routes in the State Scenic Road program. These signs are repeated a number of times along the length of the byway as well. Although these Scenic Road signs are important in identifying Connecticut’s *scenic roads*, they do not



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specifically call upon Route 169's designation as a *National Scenic Byway*. All byways signage, but especially signs at terminals, should be unique to the byway itself and seek to preserve its character, rather than visually crowd the roadway.

- Signs should be placed at the Rocky Hollow Road intersection in Lisbon and the Massachusetts state line in Woodstock, unless the byway is extended to recommended terminals in Taftville and Southbridge. In that case, signs should be placed at the new terminals
- Signs should be made large enough to present the logo in a way that makes it recognizable and memorable to travelers
- Signs should have wooden or weathering steel posts

Directional Signs

Signs directing drivers should be placed on nearby or adjacent State routes, showing the directions of the byway. On major routes such as Routes 6, 44, and Interstate 395, it may be beneficial to have larger and more prominent signs than on lower-traffic routes.

- Signs should use directional arrows to show the path of the byway
- Signs should be placed so that they are non-obtrusive and so that signs do not overcrowd the roadway shoulder
- Signs should have wooden or weathering steel posts



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Confirmation Signs

Confirmation signs should be used throughout the byway as trail markers to indicate the correct route and to reinforce the byway brand.

- Signs should use the official logo but be smaller than other types of signs
- Signs should be fixed to existing sign posts or to telephone poles
- Signs should act as *trail blazes*

Additional Signs

It may become beneficial to implement a tourism signage program, using the byway logo, similar to the Connecticut Wine Trail, Connecticut Antiques Trail, or the Agricultural Directional Signage program. The implementation of such a program is contingent on a marketing partnership of area businesses and attractions. This possibility should be reexamined following the implementation of the Plan.

