



Wayfinding and Resource Interpretation

Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to the ways in which travelers orient themselves as they move from place to place. It includes sensory as well as signs and other graphic communication elements that provide cues to orienting oneself and to choosing a path within an environment. These cues can include natural features and formations, travel routes, and directional and informational signs. Mapping, web-based information, and travel brochures are also elements of wayfinding. Another important aspect is safe travel, which includes road safety and condition of travel routes.

An analysis of the current condition of wayfinding in the Scenic Byway Corridor and along the Scenic Byway determined that there are a few wayfinding techniques in use, but there is an inconsistent application. There is a general lack of directional and informational signs, especially those directing travelers to destinations. The only interpretive installations in the Scenic Byway Corridor are the historic markers from the State Historic Marker Program. Commercial signage exists along the more travelled routes in the Scenic Byway Corridor, principally along New York State Routes 145, 81, and 23. Along New York State Route 145 commercial signs detract from the scenic and historic character of the Scenic Byway Corridor. There are no roadside waysides along the Scenic Scenic Byway.

Wayfinding Recommendations

A consistent wayfinding approach is required for the Scenic Byway Corridor and the Scenic Byway. Wayfinding should include directional and regulatory signs to help visitors find their way along the Scenic Byway, to interesting sites

within the Scenic Byway Corridor, and to potential waysides. Informational signs are needed to identify important places and events along the Scenic Byway, and a visual acknowledgement at the gateways or portals into the Scenic Byway Corridor is needed to cue the traveler that they have arrived. A hierarchy of wayfinding and interpretive signage occurs on the following page. Specific recommendations are outlined below. These recommendations are also illustrated on the Wayside and Interpretive Framework figure..

- Subtly announce the Durham Valley Scenic Byway at each of its five natural entries within the Scenic Byway Corridor. A two-tiered program of wayfinding signage would bring the traveler from a State Route (i.e., 145, 81, and 23) to a County Road (i.e., 67, 67A, 31, 22, 20, 20B, and 10), and ultimately to Scenic Byway roads such as Cornwallville, Sutton, and Cochrane.
 - › **Tier 1 Wayfinding** – signs located on State Routes would utilize New York Department of Transportation standard blue and white and brown and white signs, typically indicating “Historic Marker” or “Point of Interest,” with arrows as needed. They would work to direct traffic to the Scenic Byway, and if permitted, would list the Scenic Byway by name.
 - › **Tier 2 Wayfinding** – signs found along county and local roads would have a distinctive design reflecting the character of the area, and listing historic, cultural, and scenic highlights throughout the Scenic Byway Corridor. Traffic would be directed to areas where travelers could stop for passive viewing, or to engage in more intensive activities such as visitor centers with traveler information, or interpretive waysides.

- Consider looking at sign system design that could be applied to Greene County with a series of three variations: Mountains, Valleys, and Historic River Towns. The design could accommodate interchangeable markers or colors, while offering a unifying county-wide theme.
- Work with the local business community to reduce “sign pollution” along New York State Route 145, the Scenic Byway, and adjacent to important historic sites.

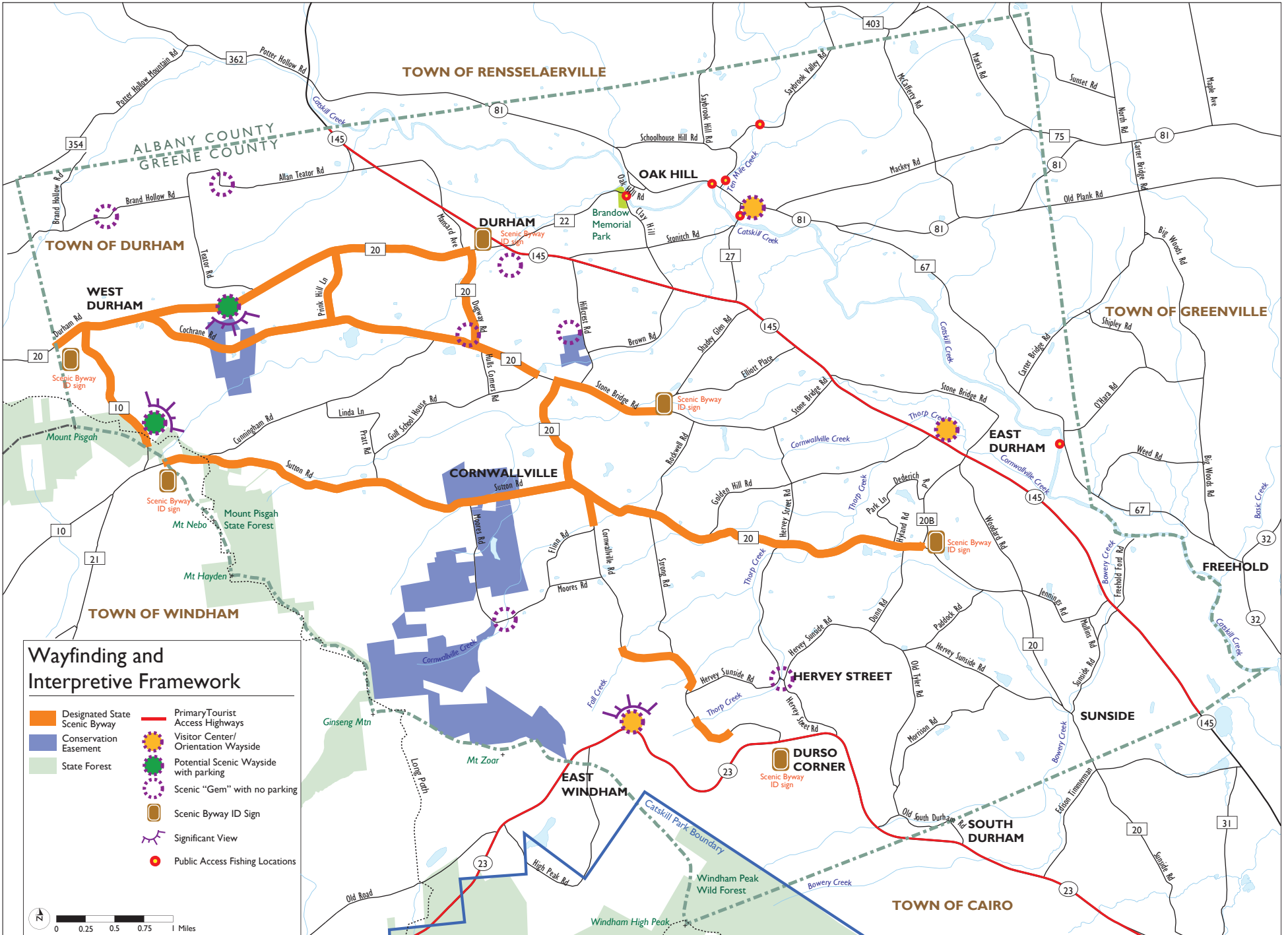
Resource Interpretation

Interpretation is about connecting people with places. Its role is to bring forward and explain the underlying meaning of the places, people, events, and natural forces that have marked and shaped an area. The resources that characterize the special nature of the Durham Valley are known as the intrinsic qualities— scenic, natural, agricultural, cultural, historic and archeological, and recreational resources. The intrinsic qualities are described in the *Intrinsic Qualities* section.











The interpretive plan for the Scenic Byway Corridor is based on these intrinsic qualities, offers unique experiences, and builds on existing amenities. It focuses on portraying the Durham Valley’s character as a combination of remarkable natural resources coupled with a fascinating and visitor-attractive social and cultural history.


Interpretive Audience

The Scenic Byway Corridor interpretive audience is two parts: the first is the traveler or visitor who arrives for the first or a repeat visit; the second is the resident who has chosen to live in the Durham Valley. In attracting visitors, the objective is to



Wayfinding and Interpretive Framework

 Designated State Scenic Byway	 Primary/Tourist Access Highways
 Conservation Easement	 Visitor Center/ Orientation Wayside
 State Forest	 Potential Scenic Wayside with parking
	 Scenic "Gem" with no parking
	 Scenic Byway ID Sign
	 Significant View
	 Public Access Fishing Locations

 0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

interest those who will sustain the character of this exceptional place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well being of its residents. For new or returning visitors who enjoy the area’s recreational or natural resources, it is important to provide additional experiences related to heritage that will encourage longer stays.

The interpretive and marketing audience for the Scenic Byway Corridor is focused on the heritage and agri-tourism traveler. The goal is to provide a high quality and authentic experience to the traveler that will attract those visitors who share the same values of the Durham Valley community – an appreciation of rural life and the desire to protect its intrinsic qualities. By focusing on heritage tourism and agri-tourism, the Durham Valley will be able to attract a specific type of visitor that will provide an economic benefit, versus attracting large numbers of visitors.

Heritage tourism is a well-documented and growing industry. The traditional heritage traveler is looking for an authentic experience and is willing to spend dollars on a high quality product. These types of travelers generally prefer local merchants and products over chains and franchises. Agri-tourism provides an important link to the Durham Valley community’s current work with its Agricultural Economic Development Project, which is focusing on economic well-being and lifestyle by supporting farmers and ranches, and by making local products available locally.

This audience is a good fit with the Scenic Byway Corridor as these types of travelers are respectful of the lifestyle of the places they visit. This is important to the Durham Valley since so much of the Scenic Byway is immediately adjacent to and provides access to private homes and farms.

The overarching goal is to provide an economic benefit and showcase the special qualities of Durham Valley without a substantial increase in traffic along the Scenic Byway.

Interpretive Themes and the Stories of the Durham Valley

Typically, an interpretive theme provides a key message that is used to organize all interpretive activities at an individual site. For an area as broad as the Scenic Byway Corridor with an equally broad range of stories, the interpretive themes recognize the important stories and places of the area, and convey those that express the qualities of the entire area. The interpretive themes convey a complete message and should be used primarily to provide information that relates to the entire Scenic Byway Corridor. In most cases, interpretive information on the Scenic Byway Corridor will be incorporated with existing facilities and be used to promote the area as a whole.

Five themes have been identified for the Scenic Byway Corridor. They were created with the assistance of the Scenic Byway Coordinating Committee and through the inventory and analysis of the Durham Valley’s historic and natural resources. The historic and natural resources inventories (presented in the *Intrinsic Qualities* section) helped to identify events, people, and resources that tell the story of the Durham Valley.

The thread of the Durham Valley’s natural setting, and its role in the development of the region, is a consistent idea that is woven through all five themes. The themes convey the historical development of the Durham Valley. The five themes are: 1) Water Resources, 2) Geography and Geology, 3) Ecosystems, 4) Human History, and 5) Culture and Arts.

The thread of the Durham Valley’s natural setting, and its role in the development of the region, is a consistent idea that is woven through all five themes. The themes convey the historical development of the Durham Valley. The five themes are: 1) Catskill Creeks, 2) Geologic, 3) Habitat Diversity, 4) Cultural History, and 5) Conservation and Stewardship. The themes and related topics are further developed below.



Catskill Creeks Theme

The creeks of the Catskills are a dynamic force that modify and profoundly influence the landscape of the Durham Valley.

- Topics related to this theme include: creek dynamics, geology, flora, fauna, human settlement, watershed protection, Hudson River Estuary, and recreation.

Geologic Theme

Reading the surrounding cliffs and landscape of the Durham Valley reveals a remarkable 400 million-year story.

- Topics related to this theme include: geology, geologic time, glaciation, fossils, plant and animal adaptations, soil, and soil erosion.

Habitat Diversity Theme

The Durham Valley is at the transition between mountains and rolling plains providing a variety of unique habitats for a great diversity of plants and animals.

- Topics related to this theme include: ecosystems, flora, fauna including tracks and signs, migratory songbirds, raptors, threatened and

endangered species, wetlands, riparian systems, interconnectedness of habitats, edge effect, and fragmentation.

Cultural History Theme

The story of the people of the Durham Valley is a rich tale embracing many cultures and spanning thousands of years.

- Topics related to this theme include: History and associated culture of Paleo-Indians, Native Americans (Mohican, Delaware, and Haudenosaunee), European settlers, farmers, and conservationists.

Conservation and Stewardship Theme

The Durham Valley's resources are fragile and it requires the combined efforts of partnering agencies, the community, and visitors to preserve and protect this special place.

- Topics related to this theme include: stewardship, agricultural sustainability, visitor impacts, human-wildlife interactions, livestock safety, impacts on aquatic resources, water quality, and forest management

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework describes an integrated current and future system of physical infrastructure that will provide facilities necessary to interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the Scenic Byway Corridor.

Specifically, the interpretive framework recommends adding several interpretive sites, including local visitor center/orientation waysides. Potential scenic waysides included in the interpretive framework are also important amenities because they offer ways of logically directing travelers through the Scenic Byway Corridor to its significant places. Interpretive

media, including a Scenic Byway logo and marketing brochure, are also important elements that will support the Interpretive Framework.

Interpretive Sites

A hierarchy of places and sites will be created to convey the stories of the Durham Valley and the Scenic Byway. The sites are intended to allow residents and visitors to gain knowledge about the Scenic Byway Corridor through a variety of experiences. Some of the proposed sites are locations where there is an infrastructure already available. A few new sites have been proposed specifically to provide panoramic views and tell the story of the Scenic Byway Corridor. The type and amount of information and level of detail will vary by site, depending on its role in the interpretive framework.

- Visitor Center/Orientation Wayside
- Potential Scenic Wayside
- Scenic Gems

Visitor Center/Orientation Wayside

Two visitor center/orientation waysides are proposed for the Scenic Byway Corridor in conjunction with existing facilities. The function of the local visitor center/orientation waysides will be to provide basic information about the Durham Valley to aid in trip planning and general interpretation, complemented by providing more in-depth interpretation about the immediate place in which the center is located. Because each would be incorporated within an existing site and/or program the local visitor center would provide an individual focus on that locale while also providing broader information about the Durham Valley.

Suggested places to locate full or partial visitor information centers include the Durham Center Museum, Durham Town Hall, and Five-State

Overlook. These locations would include such services as visitor parking, staffed or unstaffed structures with interpretive panels, brochures and maps, picnic areas, rest rooms, and even river access.

- Durham Center Museum – the Durham Center Museum provides exhibits and interpretive information on local history as well as serving as depository for genealogical information. The museum is situated at a key location that will be supported by the Scenic Byway. It is also in a location where information about the Scenic Byway Corridor can be distributed, and activities undertaken by the Scenic Byway Coordinating Committee can be conveyed.
- Durham Town Hall – the Durham Town Hall is staffed on a consistent basis with individuals already knowledgeable about the Durham Valley. It is also located on one of the few publicly-owned parcels in the Durham Valley. The Town Hall site provides an excellent opportunity to create an orientation wayside for the Scenic Byway Corridor. There is access to Catskill Creek adjacent to the Durham Town Hall that is routinely used for fishing and swimming. However, parking along County Route 27 can be a hazard during the summer months. Expansion and enhancement of creek access would benefit permanent and seasonal residents as well as tourists.
- Five-State Overlook – the existing wayside on New York State Route 23 offers the famed “Five State View” that extends over the Hudson River Valley to the Berkshires, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Hampshire and north to the Adirondacks. The overlook provides an immediate opportunity for enhancement through interpretive panels and some simple site design elements.

Potential Scenic Wayside

In addition to the visitor center/orientation waysides, two potential scenic waysides are proposed along the Scenic Byway where opportunities exist to provide information related to the Scenic Byway Corridor and to complement other materials. A potential scenic wayside would typically include a small parking area, safe ingress and egress into the wayside, educational and interpretive media, and a means to explore or further enjoy the setting such as a trail connection, a picnic site, or a photographic opportunity. Interpretive media would include wayfinding information, panels or signs conveying information on the history of the site or its surroundings, an illustrated map of the Scenic Byway Corridor for orientation, and seating if appropriate. Potential scenic waysides are recommended at select locations on the Susquehanna Turnpike and County Route 10 near the Long Path.

Scenic Gems

There are dozens of significant places within the Scenic Byway Corridor that contribute to Durham Valley's heritage. Many are not located immediately adjacent to the Scenic Byway, and some are found in more remote locations. Collectively, these places play a vital role in telling the broader Durham Valley stories to residents and visitors. They are termed Scenic Gems. Scenic gems are interpretive stops within the Scenic Byway Corridor that might include historic farmhouses, overlooks, short hikes, and stone bridges. With little room to park and no facilities for the traveler, these might simply require a marker on the roadside with the name of the stop.

Logo

There already exists a wealth and diversity of markers, signs, logos and identifying symbols that are used by the multiple public agencies, municipalities, and preservation groups to highlight

their own cultural, historic and recreational features. Because of this, it is important that the Scenic Byway Coordinating Committee introduce a simple mechanism that identifies the Scenic Byway.



A simple logo that identifies the Scenic Byway will be added to existing and future interpretive sites.

A simple logo that identifies the Scenic Byway will be added to existing and future interpretive sites. The logo can be displayed prominently on partner sites, and at new visitor centers or waysides. The logo will also serve to visually tie the proposed interpretive sites and elements of the Scenic Byway Corridor into a cohesive image. It is also envisioned to be a part of the threshold signs to the Scenic Byway and other Scenic Byway Corridor wayfinding signs. Two designs of potential logos were completed during the planning process and are presented here.

Management Actions - Wayfinding and Interpretive Strategy

Create three scenic waysides to convey the interpretive stories of the Byway Corridor and provide additional visitor opportunities.

- Work with NYSDOT to improve the Five-State Overlook site as a pilot project for interpretive wayside development. Provide site improvements, interpretive signs, and visitor amenities.
- Work with NYSDOT to add the logo and interpretive information to the Five-State Overlook
- Develop a typical wayside site plan for use in developing interpretive waysides. Consult NYSDOT and other partners.
- Work with private landowners in evaluating locations along the Susquehanna Turnpike for a potential scenic wayside.
- Work with private landowners in evaluating locations along County Route 10 for a potential scenic wayside.

Create two visitor center/orientation waysides, to convey interpretive, educational, and marketing information.

- Work with the Town of Durham and other partners to develop visitor center/orientation waysides.
- Work with the Town of Durham in evaluating the Town Hall site as a potential visitor center/orientation wayside.
- Work with the Town of Durham in developing architectural and site plans and interpretive installations for a visitor center/orientation wayside.
- Work with the Durham Center Museum in evaluating the site as a potential visitor center/orientation wayside.
- Work with the Durham Center Museum in developing architectural and site plans and interpretive installations for a visitor center/orientation wayside.