

TOWN HALL 3 EAST MAIN ROAD PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: April 27, 2026 @ 6:00 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting Room

Verne Leach, Selectman
Samuel Haupt, Selectman
Edward Munch, Selectman
Terry Walker, Town Administrator
Bruce Cullett, Police Chief
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent

Public Attendees: Ryan Griffis, BRPC, Linda Zanboni

Item 1: Call to order: 6:00 P.M.

Item 2: Roll Call: Chairman Leach present, Selectman Haupt present, Selectman Munch present

Item 3: State Recording status: Town Administrator Walker, Selectman Verne Leach recording for personal reasons under exemption E

Item 4: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: Led by Selectman Leach

Item 5: Review and Approve BOS Meeting Minutes for 4/13/2026: Selectman Leach motion to approve 4/13/2026 minutes pending changes and amend agenda date from 4/7/2026 to 4/13/2026, Selectman Munch second, 3-0.

Item 6: Update of Departments:

Police Department:

Chief Cullett informed the BOS that his range on Curtin Road will be utilized for police department qualifications and noise will be expected on May 2nd. The following Saturday, May 9th the qualifications will take place in Windsor.

Emergency Management Director:

EMD Cullett mentioned that the EMPG grant application are available with a June 1st deadline.

Finance Committee Chairman:

Fin Com Chairman Cullett mentioned the April 1st Finance Committee Meeting when it was a unanimous vote to support the expansion of the COA Director position. Bruce mentioned that Bonny DiTomasso is a tremendous asset and advocates for seniors to stay in their homes. The expansion would raise the salary to \$5,200.00 and be funded through the Formula Grant. The increase would not cost the town anything.

Highway Department:

- Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that houses are being built and sold without driveway or well permits being issued and wondered what can be done because this is a problem. Justin felt that all the departments involved should sign off on the permits before the Occupancy Permit is issued. He felt that he should sign off on the driveway permit before all the other permits are signed. Justin mentioned that a house was built on Haskell Road and sold without a driveway or well permit. Selectman Leach agreed that the homeowner should not be given final approval until the driveway permit is sign.

- Chief Cullett felt that the Tax Collector, Treasurer and Highway Superintendent should be added to Permittees for their approval with a signature page.
- The Selectmen will bring this to the attention of the Building Inspector, Tim Sears, and have him attend a future meeting.
- Superintendent Russell asked the BOS if the \$3,500 in Town Hall Maintenance could be used for dense grade for the parking lot. The BOS did not have an issue with that.

Assessors:

- Jonathon Mejias, Head Assessor, mentioned:
- Change of Address letters were mailed with tax bills and Paula King, DLS, stated that the directive for change of addresses came from her.
- Jonathon completed course 5 and passed the MAAO exam.
- ATB case was mediated and the Assessors /taxpayer were happy with outcome.
- Abatements have been processed. Patriots Properties will be installing Permittees and updating building permits.

Town Administrator:

- TA Walker mentioned that a resident called wanting permission to use the meeting room to play basketball. The BOS mentioned that he should be notified that the meeting room is no longer available for recreational use.
- Reserve Fund Transfers: 4 invoices from Mirabito were in my spam. I paid two but the funds in Utilities-Heating has been depleted. Plus, interest on loans accounts in in deficit. She will bring the Reserve Funds transfers before the Finance Committee's meeting tomorrow night.
- TA Walker questioned the BOS if the citizens petitions used last week should be attachments to the 4/13/2026 minutes. The BOS mentioned that the citizens' petitions need to be part of the minutes.
- The copier has been making strange noises and will be serviced tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

Sam Haupt:

Sam presented a letter to the BOS from Governor Healy regarding his appointment to the Pilot Program.

Town Treasurer:

Treasurer Wendling presented a quote for a reconciliation module from SoftRight for \$3,500.00. The module will be utilized to reconcile bank statements and expedite reconciling on a monthly basis. This needs to be purchased now to balance FY26 which is July 2025, to the present and training will also be provided for Treasurer Wendling. The funds will be taken from various Treasurer/ Collector appropriations.

Selectman Haupt supports the module regardless of how it is funded, and authorizes Terry Walker, Town Administrator, to sign contract with SoftRight, Selectman Munch second, 3-0.

Item 7: 6:30 Discussion and possible vote on designating Skyline Trail (Middlefield Road) to be a State Scenic Byway with Ryan Griffis from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission: Ryan Griffis, Transportation Planner for Berkshire Regional Planning Commission gave a very detailed report on the positive impact that designating Middlefield Road as a State Scenic Byway. He mentioned that Bob Graves, Hinsdale Town Administrator, has already agreed to designating Middlefield Road as a State Scenic Byway. Ryan mentioned that a State Scenic Byways is a route with natural beauty, local tourism this route meets all the qualifications for a scenic byway. Grant funding to scenic byways is a priority and future opportunities for grant funding will be available. The document is created by the state, and the document will be signed by the Town Administrators to be sent to our State Legislators. Highway Superintendent Russell asked if there were any restrictions on tree maintenance. Ryan explained that there are no restrictions because the town is responsible for maintenance of roads and safety issues. Selectman Leach motion to designate Skyline Trail (Middlefield Road) as a State Scenic Byway, Selectman Haupt second 3-0.

Item 8: Discussion and vote on which town positions to designate as a Special Municipal Employee Position: TA Walker does not have the list and will contact Town Clerk Leach for a list of all appointed positions in town. Placed on Hold

Item 9: Discussion and possible vote on increasing hours for the Town Administrator, council on Aging Director and primary Assessor Positions:

Town Administrator, Terry Walker, mentioned that she has been working an average of 35 hours per week as Town Administrator and the BOS considers the position a 25-hour per week job. She mentioned that all her time sheets signed off by the BOS described the duties performed and total hours per week. She is not asking for a 10-hour increase but 4 hours per week to meet deadlines and complete each task on a timely basis. TA Walker requested 4 hours @ \$25.00 which was \$5,200 per year and was not asking for the additional 3% COLA.

Selectman Munch felt that she is underpaid and she should get the 3% COLA plus, the additional 4 hours per week. Selectman Leach motion to increase TA Salary by 3%, Selectman Haupt second, 2-1. Selectman Munch did not agree With BOS vote.

Primary Assessor, Jonathon Mejias, requested 3 hours per week to the assessor's office to be in line with other towns, spend more time in the office and increase his hours to 15 per week. Selectman Munch mentioned that Jonathon does a great job and felt he should have his hours increased by 3 hours per week. Selectman Haupt mentioned that the head assessor's salary was increased last year. Jonathon requested 3 hours per week, which was around \$5,200 per year since his duties may increase during the next year. Selectman Leach motion to increase Lead Assessor salary by 3% Selectman Munch second, 3-0.

COA Director, Bonny DiTomasso, was not present, Selectman Leach mentioned that the salary has doubled in the last two years. He feels that if the COA director's salary is paid from the Formula grant that will be taking money away from elderly.

Selectman Haupt felt that all salaries need to be budgeted at town meeting. The BOS felt that 60 residents sent back a questionnaire requesting services, but these seniors do not need services all the time. Selectman Munch mentioned that Bonny does a great job and supports the \$5200.00 salary being paid through a grant. Selectman Munch asked why the other two board members were against the unanimous recommendation of the Finance Committee-funding the \$5,200.00 with the Formula Grant. Selectman Leach motion to increase the COA Director Salary by 3% (raise and appropriate) at ATM. Selectman Haupt second, Selectman Munch mentioned that the formula grant funding would not raise the taxes, Selectman Haupt said Bonny's time sheets reflect that she is also doing shine services as part of her job which is a volunteer position.

Fin Com Member Cullett read the email from Adam Frank where the Formula grant can cover the COA Director's salary. Fin Com Chairman was baffled that the BOS do not want to expand the services to the elderly at no cost to the town. Cullett also mentioned that services to the elderly have doubled in the last two years.

Item 10: Discussion and possible vote on FY27 budget: N/A

Item 11: Discussion and possible vote on articles and finalizing the Annual Town Meeting Warrant: May need discussion with other departments.

Item 12: Review and Approve Accounts Payable, Treasury Warrant Payroll Warrant: V22-2026

Item 13: Public Input: Linda Zanboni, 3 Bonny Lane, had a complaint because she is having a hard time driving in her driveway. She mentioned that her Jeep doesn't fit in her driveway since the road construction. She also mentioned that when the town threw the gate down on her property, she had to clean up the mess. She also has \$800.00 damages to her jeep tires but does not have a receipt. She claims it is because the end of her driveway is not as wide as before the road construction. Linda does not have invoices for the damage done to her jeep.

Highway Superintendent Russell mentioned that all driveways are wider than before and unless she replaces her culvert the driveway entrance cannot be wider than the culvert. Justin mentioned that the driveway is 20 feet wide. Selectman Munch asked if Justin could put stakes at the edge of the culvert. Justin stated that the area is all rock and ledge and placing stakes is impossible. Justin reiterated that her driveway entrance is the same width as before the paving took place. Justin agreed to do a site visit and discuss the issue with Linda.

Bruce Cullett as a Peru Taxpayer:

Bruce asked the Board of Selectmen to clarify why they do not want to provide more services to the elderly by expanding the services of the COA Director. Leach stated he wants to treat everyone the same and give the COA Director 3% like everyone else. Bruce mentioned that the COA Director's calls are confidential and she cannot describe all her duties because of confidentiality. Bruce noted that the Formula Grant can be used to fund the COA salary. Bruce mentioned that he was baffled because Finance Committee member Haupt voted in support of increasing the services and funding the COA Director salary with the Formula Grant and now Selectman Haupt is against the increase in elderly services. Selectman Haupt clarified that he was concerned that you can't simply zero out the salary on the budget with the expectations of free money. Selectman Munch is in favor of expanding services for elderly and understands the COA Director goes to people's homes and is on call 24/7. Bruce reiterated that he is baffled that the BOS does not want to use grant funds to fund a position and expand services to the elderly. Bruce asked the BOS if they had a personal vendetta against Bonny DiTomasso. Selectman Leach stated, "Don't go there"! Bruce then asked why the BOS voted against expanding services to the elderly. Selectman Haupt understands that it is not a certainty that Bonny could be paid out of the grant and Selectman Haupt has a problem with the COA Director being paid more than the Selectmen because the BOS spend a tremendous amount of time outside of meetings. Selectman Haupt stated he views the COA position as partly volunteer. Bruce stated that the COA Director is a part-time paid position. Selectman Haupt stated that the Town Administrator is not in the same category as the Highway Superintendent. Bruce Stated that the Highway Superintendent and the Town Administrator are both considered full time positions. Selectman Haupt suggested that an article be drafted that shows the Fin Com recommendation with their support noting that the BOS voted 2-1 to increase the salary by 3%. The BOS agreed that TA Walker contact legal counsel and town accountants to get answers on how to draft funding the COA position.

Item 14: Adjourn: Selectman Leach made motion to adjourn the 4/27/2026 BOS Meeting, Selectman Munch second, Vote 3-0. The 4/27/2026 BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Articles used:

- 4/13/2026 minutes
- V22-2026
- State Scenic byway packet
- Treasurer quote from Softright
- Sam Haupt letter from Governor Healy

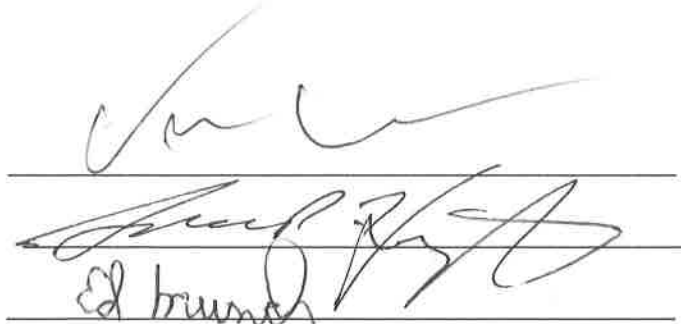
Terry Walker
Recording Secretary

Verne Leach, Chairman

Samuel Haupt, Selectman

Edward Munch, Selectman

Date Approved: 5/11/26



Town Administrator

From: Ryan Griffis <rgriffis@berkshireplanning.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 9:00 AM
To: Town Administrator
Cc: Clete Kus
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Skyline Trail Scenic Byway Proposal - Peru

Good Morning Terry Walker,

My name is Ryan Griffis and I am a transportation planner for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC). We hope this letter finds you well, and that your role as a local leader continues to be undaunted by new challenges and uncertainties as we face a new year of change and renewal. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Planning Agency (RPA) for the region, we have had the distinct pleasure of serving communities in The Berkshires, ranging from comprehensive plans, land-use development, to specific projects to meet contextual community wants and needs.

As part of our duties, we have recently begun reviewing the prospect of having the Skyline Trail (also known as Middlefield Road and Main Road) designated as a State Scenic Byway. This route, which spans five communities (Hinsdale, Peru, Middlefield, Chester, and Huntington) across the Berkshires and Pioneer Valley, was proposed for designation by the Chair of Transportation Advisory Committee and is supported by the proposed projects in our current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to support the region's scenic, cultural, natural history, and infrastructure.

As you are likely aware, our region of Western Massachusetts is known for its rural and natural beauty, which is why we are home to so many iconic scenic byways, including Routes 112, 116, Jacob's Ladder, as well as the Mohawk Trail, a National Scenic Byway. Scenic Byways are roads specially recognized for their outstanding archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and/or scenic qualities. These routes, which often highlight unique regional landscapes and heritage, are promoted for tourism, economic development, and most importantly: preservation.

At this stage of the process, we have begun initial outreach with our counterparts at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), who agree that the Skyline Trail's designation as a scenic byway would be a benefit for our regions, communities, and residents. Before announcing any efforts, however, it is important to us that we first speak with the communities which would benefit and be impacted by this route designation. We will be reaching out to each town [administrator / manager] to schedule a brief virtual meeting to discuss any questions or concerns which may arise. Thank you for your time, and we look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

Best,

Ryan Griffis

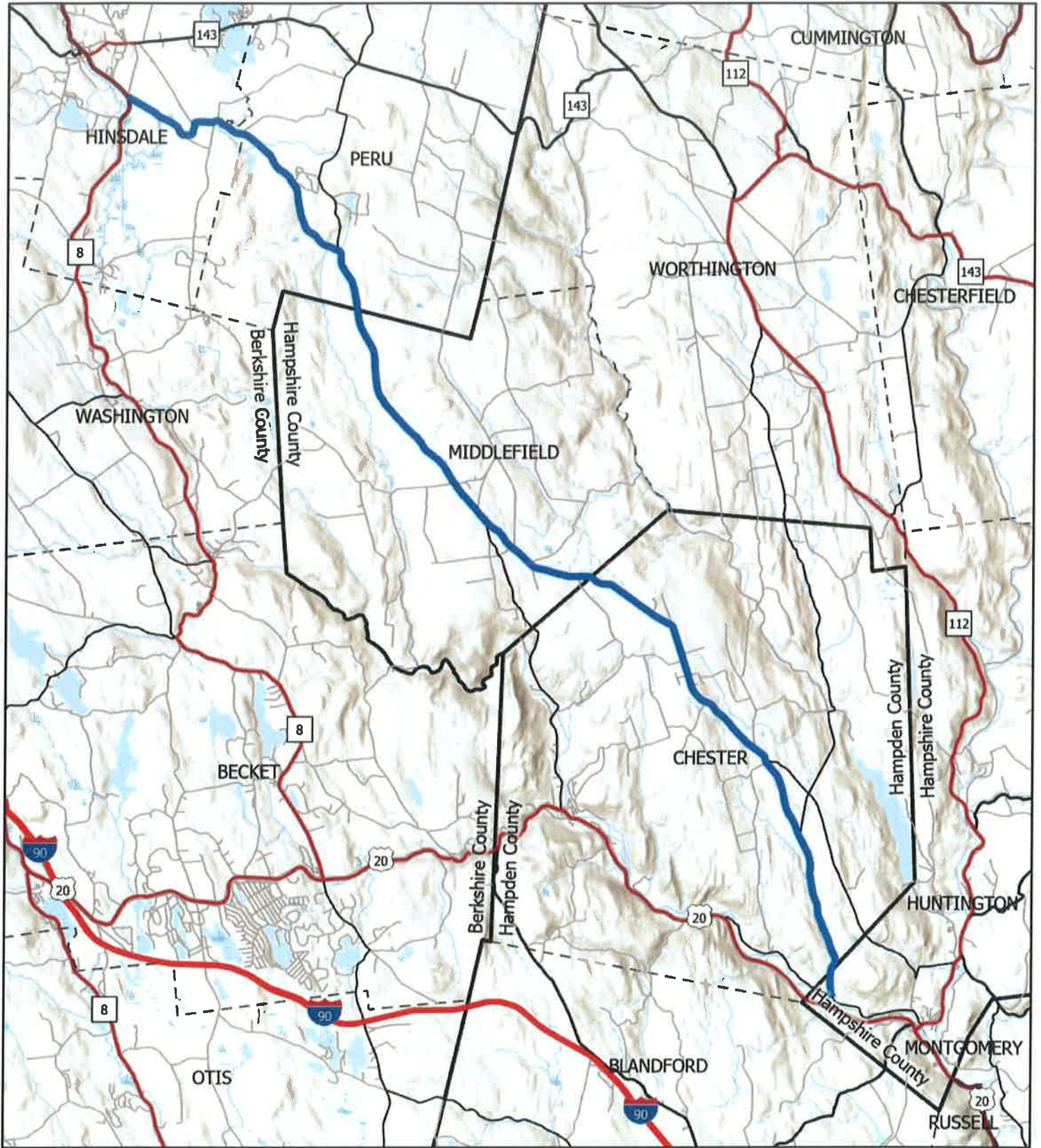
Transportation Planner

Skyline Trail Scenic Byway Designation Proposal

Peru Select Board Presentation

April 27, 2026





Legend

- Skyline Trail
- County Lines
- Town Lines

Skyline Trail

Identified Benefits of Scenic Byway Designation

- **Enhances Community Identity & Pride**

A scenic byway provides a unifying “story” or location for a community, showcasing what makes the area unique. Residents often feel a sense of pride when their local landscapes, history, or culture are officially recognized. This identity can also become a tool for local branding and long-term planning.

- **Encourages Historic & Environmental Preservation**

Scenic byways emphasize natural scenery, wildlife, habitats, and historic sites along the route. Recognition can motivate communities to conserve these features rather than allowing development that erodes local character.

- **Boost to Local Tourism**

Scenic byway designation is known to bring in travelers across the country who seek out picturesque or culturally meaningful routes. Even short byways can become “must-see” detours for road-trippers, RV travelers, cyclists, and weekend tourists.

- **Supports Local Businesses**

More travelers on the route means more spending at restaurants, shops, lodging, and other local services. Small businesses, especially rural or independent ones, often see noticeable revenue increases once a byway is designated. The added customer base can help grow existing businesses and attract new ones to the community.

- **Promotes Outdoor Recreation**

A designated route can spotlight nearby trails, rivers, parks, and recreation areas, increasing their use and visibility. Visitors often stay longer to enjoy recreational activities, which can diversify tourism and encourage healthy, outdoor engagement.

- **Increase in Grant Funding Opportunities**

Many state and federal programs specifically fund scenic byways, offering support for signage, preservation projects, or tourism development. Byway designation can make routes eligible for grants for upgrades like viewpoint turnouts, trail access points, interpretive signs, beautification efforts, and other improvements that the community may not have the budget to tackle on its own.

Scenic Byway Designation FAQs

- **What makes this road special – what are the criteria for designation?**

Scenic byways must exhibit one or more of six core intrinsic qualities: scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, or natural significance. The Skyline Trail is a scenic destination of a natural overlook which has been part of local history years before its proposed designation.

- **Will this change local ownership or management of this road?**

No. Municipalities will still maintain ownership and management of their section of the Skyline Trail if it becomes a scenic byway. Designation can provide funding opportunities to help manage and maintain the road.

- **Are there funding opportunities that come with designation?**

There are grants and funding opportunities to implement projects on designated byways and to support management and maintenance. Funding is initially available for the development of a Corridor Management Plan (CMP), which is generally required to apply for byway grant funding.

- **What is a Corridor Management Plan (CMP)?**

A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is a written, community-based plan for a scenic byway corridor that lays out how the route's special features ("intrinsic qualities") will be protected, enhanced, interpreted, and promoted over time.

- **Why is a CMP needed and what does it do?**

The CMP identifies key resources, establishes goals, strategies, and responsibilities so towns can manage preservation, signage, and roadway safety in a coordinated way.

- **Do scenic byways bring in tourists or help local businesses?**

Scenic byway programs often cite economic opportunities through tourism and recreation as a benefit, especially when managed to protect community character. CMPs commonly address tourism development and marketing, so communities can shape how visitors experience the corridor.



**SCENIC
AMERICA**

National Scenic Byways Program: MASSACHUSETTS

About the National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991, recognizes historic, scenic, and culturally important roads, all of which promote economic development and tourism in communities around the U.S. There are more than 1,200 byways in all 50 states.

Massachusetts is home to 14 scenic byways, four of which are designated as national scenic byways. All of Massachusetts' byways play an integral role in the economic development of many smaller communities in the state by funneling visitors to historic seaports and village centers with a wealth of culturally significant architectural and historical landmarks. Overall, the Bay State's scenic byways offer visitors from around the country and the world a unique and exciting experience while simultaneously benefitting local economies.

Key Points

- Massachusetts is home to 14 scenic byways, including four national scenic byways and 10 state scenic byways.
- Visitors to Massachusetts directly spent on \$24.9 billion in 2019, generating \$1.6 billion in state and local tax revenue.
- Massachusetts' parks generated \$1.3 billion in total economic output in gateway communities in 2019, supporting 11,000 jobs and \$502 million in labor income.

14

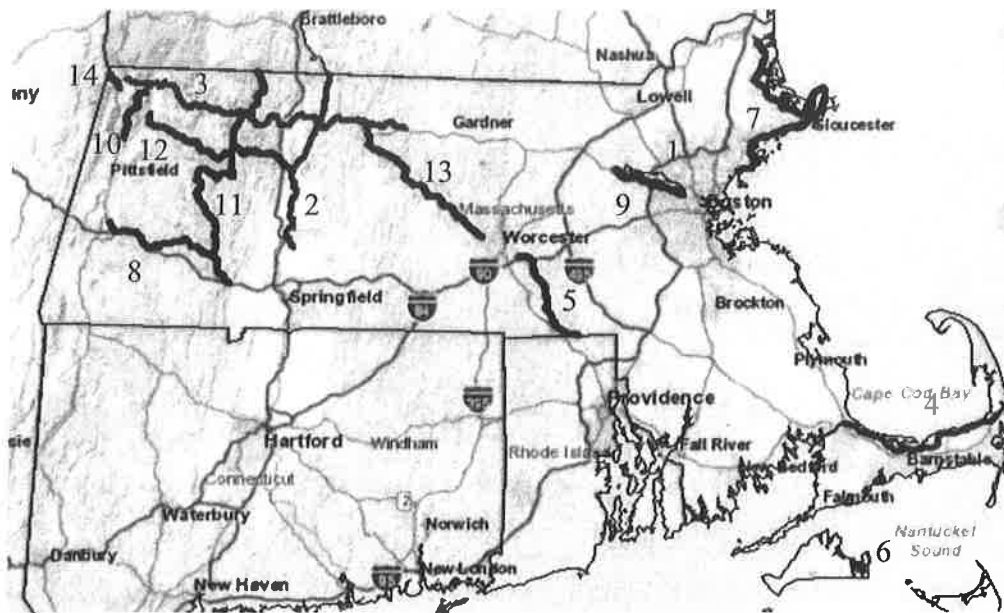
Massachusetts is home to
14 scenic byways.



Massachusetts Travel Industry Facts

- > Supports over 155,500 jobs
- > Each dollar spent by a visitor generates 4.1 cents in state tax receipts 2.5 cents in local taxes.

Images: Connecticut River byway credit: fhwa (top), battle Road Scenic Byway credit: nps (column)



Massachusetts byways provide access to the state's most spectacular public lands including:

- > 7 State Parks
- > 7 State Forests
- > 3 National Wildlife Refuges
- > Cape Cod National Seashore
- > Minute Man National Historical Park



Images: Route 112/Lost Villages credit: flickr (top), Mohawk Trail credit: Wikimedia commons (bottom)

Scenic Byways in Massachusetts

ALL-AMERICAN ROADS

1. BATTLE ROAD SCENIC BYWAY

STATE SCENIC BYWAYS

5. BLACKSTONE CANAL HERITAGE BYWAY
6. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ROAD
7. ESSEX COASTAL SCENIC BYWAY
8. JACOB'S LADDER TRAIL
9. MINUTEMAN HIGHWAY
10. MOUNT GREYLOCK
11. ROUTE 112 SCENIC BYWAY
12. ROUTE 116 SCENIC BYWAY
13. ROUTE 122/LOST VILLAGES SCENIC BYWAY
14. TACONIC TRAIL

NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS

2. CONNECTICUT RIVER BYWAY
3. MOHAWK TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY
4. OLD KING'S HIGHWAY (ROUTE 6A)

All scenic byways exhibit one or more of six core intrinsic qualities — scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, or natural. For a road to be named a **national scenic byway**, it must first be designated a **state, tribal, or federal agency scenic byway**. Once achieving that, a road may apply for **national scenic byway** designation, but its intrinsic quality must be of regional significance. **All-American Roads** are the very best of the national scenic byways, demonstrating at least two intrinsic qualities of national significance.



727 15TH STREET NW, SUITE 1100
 WASHINGTON, DC 20005
 202.792.1300
 SCENIC.ORG

Town Administrator

From: Tax Collector
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2026 7:19 AM
To: Town Administrator
Subject: Monday Agenda

Hi Terry:

I got an estimate from Softright for the cash book rec for \$3500.00. We need to discuss this at the Selectmen's meeting on Monday. I don't know if it needs to be a separate item or it can be discussed under Departments.

I would like to get this discussed on Monday night.

Thank you,

Caryn E. Wendling, CMMC, CMMT
Tax Collector/Treasurer
Town of Peru
3 East Main Road
Suite 101
Peru, MA 01235
(413) 655-0072, Ext. 1
(413) 655-2759 (fax)

Order Form: Q-52303-1
 Creation Date: 4/17/2026, 4:38 AM
 Expires On: 6/1/2026



Phone: (866) 777-0069
 Email: info@sprbrk.com

Ship To:
 Caryn Wendling
 Town of Peru, MA
 3 East Main Road
 Peru, Massachusetts 01235
 taxcollector@townofperuma.com

Bill To:
 Caryn Wendling
 Town of Peru, MA
 3 East Main Road
 Peru, Massachusetts 01235
 taxcollector@townofperuma.com

Account Manager	E-mail	Phone Number	Payment Terms
Jessica Manfre	jessica.manfre@sprbrk.com	(954) 866-8111	Net 30

Estimated Professional Services						
PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION	RATE	QTY	DISC (%)	Net Unit Price	NET PRICE
Standard Professional Services	Standard Professional Services - Bank Rec Training	USD 250.00	14	0.000	USD 250.00	USD 3,500.00
Estimated Professional Services Total:						USD 3,500.00



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133

(617) 725-4000

MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 23, 2026

Samuel P. Haupt
7 Gentian Hill Road
Peru, MA 01235

Dear Samuel,

I am pleased to appoint you as a member of the Commission on PILOT for State-Owned Land pursuant to Executive Order 645.

Before commencing your responsibilities, you must take an oath of office. The appointment will be void unless that oath is taken within three months of the date of this letter. Consistent with the executive order under which you were appointed, you will serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

Lieutenant Governor Driscoll and I appreciate your willingness to serve the Commonwealth in this capacity.

Congratulations on your appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. T. Healey".

Maura T. Healey

cc: Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
William J. McNamara, Comptroller of the Commonwealth
Matthew Gorzkowicz, Secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance