

The Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan

Version 1.0

21.0 All American Road Increased Visitor Accommodation Plan

21.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary challenge facing the TTSB is to identify strategies to balance increased numbers of visitors in the future so as to avoid a range of future potential problems. Three areas essential to a vibrant and sustainable tourism industry:

- the protection of natural resources,
- quality expansion of public infrastructure, and
- user facilities that are accessible, convenient, and well maintained.

Sustainable tourism is tourism that can continue to grow and perpetuate itself into the future without destroying resources. It recognizes that balance is essential to a stable and prosperous tourism economy. Visitors and facilities must support one another. Visitor numbers must be responsive to site conditions--150 people at an overlook promoted heavily for romantic sunsets are sure to disappoint.

Communities with new and growing tourism economies are often at greatest risk. As visitor numbers increase and retail and tax revenues show a similar surge, the rally call becomes "more is even better". Many communities fail to study why people are coming, and what they are expecting. Many more fail to investigate the impacts tourism will have on local residents and their daily lives.

If, for example, a community's greatest draw and tourism appeal is an escape from the intensity of metropolitan life--overbuilding of motels, for example, may soon destroy that community's competitive edge, and drive visitors elsewhere. Sustainable tourism, however, would suggest that the community marketing solitude increase their market share by investigating creative ways in which to locate a cabin in the woods, or the development of smaller bed and breakfast inns and rustic lodges. Too many communities, unwittingly, "kill the goose that laid the golden egg" chasing short term profits, rather than carefully plotting a future.

The TTSBAC has paid attention to this concept and has had planning discussions regarding how not to "kill this golden goose". New tourism development will be examined and advice from residents and the general public will be acquired. Reviews of preserving intrinsic qualities and cost/benefit analyses will be undertaken where appropriate.

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The TTSBAC does not expect a vast increase in visitation due to a national designation. Rather, they expect the tourist mix to change to include more bus and van tours with visitors coming from longer distances, i.e., international and coastal travelers.

21.2 PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources define the TTSB corridor and provide its scenic quality. The greatest and most irreversible threat to the corridor's scenic quality is new development on the viewsheds. Most of the land along the TTSB is in private ownership, and as such, this threat is both very real and immediate for the highway corridor. The destruction of natural resources can also be due to direct overuse by visitors or indirect overuse affiliated with activity within the corridor. For example, overuse by visitors could lead to trail erosion, disturbance of natural habitats, and littering problems. Indirect overuse could lead to ground water pollution from too much wastewater, or highly visible utility lines servicing new uses along the corridor.

The TTSB marketing efforts will lead visitors to "lesser attractions" if the major intrinsic qualities are in danger from overuse.

21.3 QUALITY EXPANSION OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Public infrastructure is needed to ensure a healthy and satisfied visitor experience and is a key component in managing capacity. New infrastructure, e.g., roads improved, signs erected, new public structures built, constructed in ways that damage the character of existing communities or compromise the scenic quality of the corridor will ultimately compromise the visitor experience. Local "watch dog" groups are already in place to ensure that the TTSB has a voice in public policy.

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21.4 USER FACILITIES

- Must be available, accessible, convenient, and well maintained
- Rest Area -- Adopt a restroom policy that creates and promotes a limited number of larger facilities and discourages byway travelers from using smaller and private facilities which should be targeted for specific user groups. There should be at least two of these facilities, one in the Sandia Park areas and the other in the Madrid-Cerrillos area. Maintenance responsibilities should be given to Bernalillo and Santa Fe Counties. Interpretive facilities, trash receptacles, RV dumping facilities, and other comfort features should be developed in conjunction with the restrooms.
- Pull-Outs -- There are several areas along the byway where pull-outs can be constructed for visitors to look at spectacular views and for slower driving traffic to pull off the road. The SBAC should work with the NMSH&TD to ensure pull-outs are constructed.

21.5 GOALS

- A. Satisfy customers (visitors).

21.6 OBJECTIVES

- A1. Accommodate increased number of visitors.
- A2. Protect intrinsic qualities.

21.7 STRATEGIES

- A1. Review study of potential overuse.
- A2. Recommend study for mitigation for “at-risk” intrinsic qualities.