

Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan

Version 2.0

7.0 Intrinsic Asset Enhancement Plan

As defined here, enhancement means restoration, rehabilitation, or improvement of a feature to protect or optimize its intrinsic qualities.

Aesthetic considerations address the visual quality of the road and the corridor-what the traveler will see and experience. Aesthetic considerations will work to ensure that myriad individual elements and policies that direct daily activity along the corridor will be implemented with a sensitivity to the natural and beauty of the byway. That sensitivity will recognize that the quality of the traveler experience directly impacts the economic vitality of the route through tourism. Aesthetic considerations should never compromise the safety or efficiency of the route. They should, however, be developed as credible options and alternatives elevating the overall visual quality of the byway.

Corridor preservation areas are recommended to acknowledge some of the large, undeveloped and relatively untouched areas that still exist along the corridor. Such areas should remain free of virtually all development. These are areas that provide easy visual and physical access to the natural features of the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway.

7.1 INTRINSIC ASSET ENHANCEMENT GOALS

A. Establish an overall design theme for each intrinsic quality on the TTSB. A design theme would establish a mutually agreed upon “expectation” for the physical management and appearance of the TTSB corridor. A design theme might, for example, endorse a certain guardrail design, establish uniform parameters for curb cuts, address the maintenance or improvement of critical views, identify environmentally appropriate building materials for corridor development, and encourage greater interaction among interpretive features.

7.2 INTRINSIC ASSET ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES

- A. Work with the NMDOT, county agencies, and others to ensure these goals, objectives, and strategies are included when planning future projects.*
- B. Stabilize features to prevent continuing damage.
- C. Restore the feature to a past (presumably better) condition.
- D. Mitigate features that detract from the quality of the corridor.

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- E. Strengthen or enhance the feature's intrinsic qualities
- F. Improve the feature's traveler facilities
- G. Make improvements compatible with regional character and intrinsic qualities

7.3 INTRINSIC ASSET ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

A1. Corridor Preservation Areas

Define corridor preservation areas along the Turquoise Trail scenic byway. These should be corridors of a sufficient length to offer a feeling of openness and escape. These preserved areas will enhance the aesthetic qualities of the Turquoise Trail and preserve a few unspoiled areas. These areas should remain under public ownership and protection. Spectacular views, critical wildlife areas, and areas sensitive to or inappropriate for development should be some of the criteria used to define these areas. Business and residential development will not be appropriate in these areas. Utility and other public infrastructure projects should be carefully designed to avoid or minimize visual intrusion. These corridors should forever provide stretches of untouched New Mexican landscape for all to enjoy. The Sandia Mountain Wilderness Area already provides preservation of unspoiled areas. The Cerrillos Hills Historic Park provides a new preserved area. Much of the still unspoiled areas of the byway are likely to be developed with housing, unless current law can be changed to prevent or mitigate it.

A2. Pullouts

Pullouts should be clearly differentiated between those intended for slow traffic turnouts and those intended for viewing landscapes and wildlife. Additionally, pullouts should be clearly identified for, or prohibited from use by motor coaches. Pullouts designed for motor coaches should provide acceleration space to allow them to safely reenter the main flow of traffic. For the construction of new pullouts for motor coaches, it was previously recommended that the SBAC investigate a cost sharing program with the major tour operators who would most benefit from such facilities. That did not occur and at this time the SBAC has even more limited resources. Instead, the current recommendation is that the NMDOT pursue that avenue.

Two new pullouts have been built between Madrid and Cerrillos. Both pullouts are graveled parking and are landscaped with rocks and plants, but neither has an acceleration lane. The first is located

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on the east side of the byway heading north. It has pull off signage and off-road access. Interpretive signage and a visitor trail is planned. The second pullout is located on the west side of the byway heading south. It has has a terrific scenic view. Additional pullouts are expected as part of a NMDOT road improvement near the intersection of County Highways 44 and 45.

Pullouts intended solely for slow vehicle passing should ideally be located in areas not offering spectacular views and should not offer any pedestrian or traveler amenities such as interpretation or walkways.

A3. Bike Paths

The southern portion of the TTSB, from I-40 to Sandia Park on Highway 14, already has a bike path/sidewalk. Observation shows that cyclists typically do not ride on the sidewalk. From Sandia Park to Madrid, there are no more developed biking paths for on-road touring bikes. A limited shoulder has been built between Madrid and Cerrillos, but is not sufficient in its present condition for bike use. The local community is working to rectify that. Cyclists typically ride on the highway which, obviously, causes safety concerns. Developing bike paths would be very expensive, and if funds could be found for the project, maintenance becomes a critical issue. Off-road mountain biking paths exist at Sandia Peak, but not formally along the byway. Bernalillo County has an extensive long term plan for proposed bike and trail corridors. That plan is available from the county. Off road biking paths have been built in the Cerrillos Hills Historic Park. County Road 57 (Waldo Road), an 8 mile gravel road, is popular with bikers and offers scenic views with little road traffic. County Roads 42 and 45 located north of Cerrillos offer on road biking with less traffic.

A4. Scenic Byway Identification Signage

Turquoise Trail logo signs are recommended to identify the route as a scenic byway. Such signs should be located directly beneath every NM State route marker. To avoid clutter of multiple byway identification signs (State, National Scenic Byway, or U.S.F.S.) it is recommended such signs appear only at gateways. The SBAC continues to work on this issue, but the results have been mixed.

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A5. Highway Signage

Research for this plan led to many comments expressing concern over too many signs along the byway and the visual clutter such signage creates. Additionally, there is a general inconsistency in the nature of signage. In the first version of the CMP, it was stated that the SBAC should make definite decisions regarding what is desirable and proceed to let relevant agencies know what has grass roots support. That process has not worked too well, since the last writing. Many in the local population believe there are too many signs. A byway study done several years ago indicated that while the local population thinks there are too many signs, visitors to the byway want more signage. Currently, there is no signage plan for the byway, except by the U.S.F.S. on the spur leading up to Sandia Crest.

A6. Driver Experience

Traffic on a byway is considered a negative experience for those traveling it. It's almost always better to have the feeling of "the open road". Since the Turquoise Trail is a New Mexico state highway, local traffic and destination traffic, and traffic going from Albuquerque to Santa Fe is expected. This plan seeks to mitigate industrial traffic, except that used to provide local service, such as package delivery, to local residents. Large trucks, such as those used to haul industrial materials to non-byway locations are considered inappropriate for the byway. Home building on a large scale will disrupt the visitor experience too. The current level of homebuilding has been noticeable, but not disruptive. Alternatives to traffic lights, such as roundabouts should be used to reduce pollution and to prevent a stop and go driving experience.

B1. User education

B2. Technical assistance programs

B3. Community fund raising campaigns

B4. Special status designation (e.g. Historic, Natural Resource)

B5. Construct new facilities to reduce visitor impact.

B6. Perform deferred maintenance.

B7. Regulate or prohibit use of the feature.

B8. Enforce applicable existing regulations to limit impacts from off site.

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- C1. Technical assistance programs
 - C2. Community fund raising campaigns
 - C3. In-kind donations of materials, service, and labor
 - C4. Seek grant funding for specific purposes.
 - C5. Foster partnerships with existing support organizations (e.g. National Trust for Historic Preservation).
 - C6. Remove vegetation to open scenic views.
 - C7. Restore vegetation, land forms, and arroyos.
 - C8. Fix highway runoff problems.
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- D1. Develop public educational materials for corridor landowners.
 - D2. Publicly recognize individuals and groups for their activities to conserve and enhance byway features.
 - D3. Promote roadside planting and maintenance efforts by the NMDOT, garden clubs, and civic groups.
 - D4. Coordinate right-of-way improvements with private improvements.
 - D5. Purchase and remove billboards not conforming with current regulations.
 - D6. Bring to the attention of local officials any signs or billboards not conforming to ordinances.
 - D7. Develop design guidelines.
 - D8. Set up local design review committees.
 - D9. Pass laws to remove detractors.
 - D10. Continue to use the Adopt A Highway program.
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- E1. Seek Historic Register Status for historic buildings or sites.
 - E2. Develop volunteer support for restoration.
 - E3. Provide support for local festivals and events.
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- F1. Develop public-private or interagency partnerships for funding.
 - F2. Provide grant seeking and technical assistance.
 - F3. Provide restrooms.
 - F4. Provide potable water.
 - F5. Provide ADA access.
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- G1. Technical and design assistance programs
 - G2. Publicly recognize individuals and groups for their activities to conserve and enhance byway features.
 - G3. Develop design guidelines for corridor construction.
 - G4. Set up local design review committees.

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7.4 INTRINSIC ASSET ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

While the SBAC wants to keep items B through G in place, there are no current projects planned specifically as part of the scenic byway program. Instead, the SBAC will continue to develop public awareness, seek to enforce existing laws, and support other organizations that have projects meeting the goals of the CMP.