



It's never been a trail for the weak of heart. It's up and down, with hairpin turns and dramatic overlooks. Half of America's population could be here in a few hours by car. It's a morning's drive from our nation's capital.

description

Yet, while it is so near to everything, its rugged and demanding appearance make it feel far away and different. It's up to us to preserve that individual look which characterizes the Midland Trail . . .



Location of Midland Trail on Eastern Seaboard



The Midland Trail (Old U.S. Route 60, West Virginia)



One of the country's oldest routes, the Midland Trail runs between the State Capitol at Charleston, the western "bookend", to White Sulphur Springs, the eastern "bookend", and on to the Virginia border. In all, the Trail compasses 119 miles of multi-faceted visitor experience.



Routing and Mileage

MIDLAND TRAIL WV BYWAY CORRIDOR ROUTING AND MILEAGE

ROUTE REMARKS	COUNTY	BEG. MP	END MP	SEGMENT MILEAGE
U.S. 60 @ State Capitol; joins I-77	Kanawha	19.00	20.83	1.83
I-77 follows I-77	Kanawha	95.34	97.13	1.79
U.S. 60 CR 60/12 (Old Midland Trail)	Kanawha	21.97	23.19	1.22
CR 60/12 Midland Trail; WB from US 60 to CR 60/18	Kanawha	0.00	5.96	5.96
CR 60/18 Midland Trail; WB from CR 60/18 to CR 60/20	Kanawha	0.19	0.45	0.26
CR 60/20 Midland Trail; WB from CR 60/20 to US 60	Kanawha	0.00	0.51	0.51
CR 70 US 60 to CR 60/21	Kanawha	0.00	0.08	0.08
CR 60/21 CR 70 to CR 60/18	Kanawha	0.00	0.41	0.41
CR 60/18 CR 60/21 to "Old Midland Trail"	Kanawha	0.00	0.19	0.19
.S .60 to Charleston Urbanized Boundary	Kanawha	29.86	37.34	7.48
	Kanawha	37.34	44.55	7.21
KANAWHA COUNTY TOTAL				26.94
U.S. 60 County line to Greenbrier County line	Fayette	0.00	46.06	46.06
FAYETTE COUNTY TOTAL				46.06
U.S. 60 County line to I-64 @ Sam Black Church	Greenbrier	0.00	15.18	15.18
	Greenbrier	15.18	35.19	20.01
WV 63 @ Caldwell				
to I-64 @ White Sulphur Springs	Greenbrier	35.19	43.80	8.61
GREENBRIER COUNTY TOTAL				43.80
BYWAY TOTAL				116.80



Physical Description

For purposes of state designation as a Scenic Highway, the Midland Trail, U.S. Route 60, runs from Charleston, Mile-marker 0 at the State Capitol, to the eastern border of West Virginia, just east of White Sulphur Springs, mile-marker 119.

The course of the current Trail runs through three counties of Kanawha, Fayette, and Greenbrier, each with distinctive terrains, each with its different viewshed and land uses. This description moves eastward.

The Trail's western segment follows the north side of the Kanawha River to its origin at the confluence of the New and Gauley Rivers at Gauley Bridge. From Charleston it runs through the bottom of the Kanawha Valley, surrounded by wooded mountains on both sides the entire way. The Valley's width in these areas generally runs one-half mile to one mile.

Between Gauley Bridge (Fayette County) and Rainelle (Greenbrier County) is a series of mountains: Gauley Mountain, Big Sewell, Little Sewell. The Trail runs along the sides of the mountains in this area and on Gauley Mountain overlooks the New River Gorge. Here the viewshed stretches out to the horizon both at the Gorge and the plateau at the south foot of Big Sewell Mountain. Throughout most of the course in this segment, the Trail winds and curves, some places with tortuous, hairpin turns.

From Rainelle to the Virginia border, the Trail runs through flat, farm pasture land and gently rolling hills and knolls; again, the viewshed

stretches for miles through broad verdant valleys. The topography here is limestone karst, with its characteristic sinkholes.

In April 1998, the Association's Board voted to ask the state to recognize a desired extension of the Trail's Scenic Highway designation westward from Charleston to the Kentucky border; this extension would add Route 60's segments in West Virginia's Putnam and Cabell counties and would pass through Huntington.

In addition to travelling the Trail proper, tourists enter the Trail from I-77 and I-64, and Route 19, through what we term Trail Gateways. Route 19, which intersects the Trail at Hico, (the current Trail center) delivers tourists from I79 to the North and from I77 Beckley area from the south. North of the Trail, Rt. 19 runs past the town of Summersville, whose land uses are residential, commercial, recreational (Summersville Lake), and heritage (Carnifex Ferry Battlefield). To the south, 19 links the Trail with Beckley and I77 and the tourists who visit this area for rafting and sightseeing at the New River Gorge Bridge. This vicinity would provide the link between the Coal Heritage and Midland Trails.

Land use along the Trail is diverse, with the two trail-end gateways, Charleston and the Lewisburg/White Sulphur Springs area, exhibiting the highest degree of development anywhere on the Trail. Along the 119 miles between these bookends, the intensity and degree of development tends to be low. There are no housing developments; residences are generally single-family units. Land use is divided into eight categories: commercial, residential, industrial, governmental, agricultural, educational, recreational, and heritage preservation. Description follows the Trail east.

CHARLESTON AREA:

Charleston proper is divided into commercial, industrial, governmental, recreational, and residential areas; these are all within 500 feet of the Trail. Right off the Trail is Daniel Boone Park; here the land usage is recreational (picnic area, fishing, and boat access), recreational-commercial (Sternwheeler cruises), and heritage (Craik-Patton House).

Outside Charleston, at Port Amherst, land use is industrial, using rail and river transportation for chemicals, coal, and gravel.

MALDEN TO HAWKS NEST:

Land use is variously residential, commercial, educational, and heavy industrial. There is one large shopping center, one of only two situated on the Trail (the other is in Rainelle). Two companies, DuPont Chemical and Elkem Metals, maintain large facilities which use an integrated system of road, rail, and river. Facilitating this movement is part of a series of river locks at Marmet and London under the Army Corps of Engineers. A coal company in Cannelton maintains an active tipple operation and storage facilities. Montgomery's land use is residential, commercial, and educational (West Virginia University Institute of Technology). Glen Ferris / Kanawha Falls contains a public boating, picnic, and fishing area at Kanawha which Elkem Metals developed and maintains; several miles east, Elkem maintains a second fishing spot at its hydroelectric dam.

HAWKS NEST TO RAINELLE:

At the heart of the Trail, land use is commercial (gas stations, grocery stores), residential, and recreational. Hawks Nest maintains a lodge, an overlook, a museum and gift shop, a tram, and a boating dock at the floor of the New River Gorge. Ansted has developed hiking/biking trails which lead all the way to Hawks Nest Park. Connecting with the Trail and extending southward within an approximately 50-mile radius, the New River Gorge National Park is used for recreation.

Currently, plans call for a green view of Hico and development of the Route 60-Route 19 intersection as an area with which to draw tourists onto the Trail and off the Trail to Carnifex Ferry State Park to the north. The Fayette County Commission is currently conducting studies as to land use and zoning which will best effect these goals. One of the Commission's plans contemplates removal of abandoned, dilapidated structures in and around the intersection to create an aesthetically pleasing Gateway.

MIDLAND & COAL HERITAGE TRAIL CONNECTIONS:

From Mile Marker 42 at Chimney Corner to Mile Marker 53 at Hico the Midland and Coal Heritage Trail (a designated National Scenic Highway) becomes one road. At this writing a Corridor Management Plan for this section of the Coal Heritage Trail is being developed. Additionally, these Scenic Byways are Bordered by the New River Gorge National Park and the New River Heritage Area. In each instance Land Uses and Zoning will defer to The highest environmental and preservation standards governing the area.

RAINELLE TO VIRGINIA BORDER:

Land use is commercial, residential, industrial, and agricultural. Most of the area around Lewisburg contains farms or industry. Lewisburg is zoned residential and commercial. In White Sulphur Springs, the Greenbrier uses its land for lodging, walking trails, and recreational activities such as horseback riding and golf; White Sulphur also includes the recreational land use of Greenbrier State Forest.

Connecting with the Trail at Caldwell is the 77-mile Greenbrier River Trail, a Rails-to-Trails bike path.

There ia a Complete Geology Report in the Appendix.