

MT UPGRADES TO REDUCE HAZARDS AND INCREASE USE

9.1

Speed Changes with Road Changes

Eliminating surprises and offering a predictable driving and travel experience over the Trail is a goal of the Association. The Trail itself has gone through periods of evolution on its eastern sector in Kanawha County where three and four lane sections have been added atop the original Trail. In these situations a drivers speed may change significantly over short distances. The role of good signage to protect drivers from hazards is key in these situations.

Hazards for Foot Traffic

In some cases on the Western Sector in Malden, Rand, Dupont City, and Belle, the Trail runs through communities where sidewalks are limited or non-existent.

In these situations road speeds need to provide for the inclusion of tourists who are unfamiliar with traffic and slower speeds are needed in these situations.

Beware Speed Traps

The Association is working with several small towns along the Byway and its Gateways which have become so notorious for their speed traps that AAA has advised alternate routes.

Beware Roadside Vendors

Traditionally, roadside vendors have been a part of the ambiance of the Midland Trail. This may take the form of garden produce or velvet Elvis paintings. In any event these vendors provide a color, flavor and culture to the Trail reminding us of an earlier era. However, it is important that pull offs for roadside marketing be designated and signed to assure safety to travelers wishing to experience this roadside phenomena. (con'd 7.2)

Time Frame Draft June 2005

Planning 2006

Establish local task forces to identify and prioritize specific signage needs and problems in their areas.

Fold their findings into the objectives of the CMP and its supporting interest groups.

Encourage development of businesses which are compatible with the long range vision of the byway as well as discouraging starts which detract from the development.

Short Term or Immediate Improvements

Areas known for hazardous conditions such as a coal preparation plant where trucks enter and leave, as well as sections frequented by timber haulers should be clearly marked for travelers unfamiliar with the Trail.

Foot traffic along the Trail should be provided with walkways. Walkways which presently exist such as the one from the Capitol to Daniel Boone Park need upgrading and maintenance.

Signage in high accident areas should be reevaluated.

Pavement markings should be reevaluated along the entire length of the Trail

Entrance and Exits to parking areas should be well defined where possible.

Object hazards should be protected by guard rails.

Investigate possibility of "historic" wooden post and "cat eyes" guard rail in some rural pasture areas

Long Term 2010+

Truck Lanes should be provided or widened as needed.

Shoulders should be upgraded at several points along the Trail.

Underpass entrances and exits at Belle and Malden which regularly need upgrades.



Signs such as this one are necessary for proposed Trail biking routes.

travelers wishing to experience this roadside phenomena.

Share the Road Signage

Since the 2000 MT CMP, MTSHA has become very active in working with groups involved in the planning of bike routes.

The Town of Ansted recently completed a bike/Walking Trail from the center of town to the base of the New River Gorge. Safety and directional signage upgrades are needed.

The **Greenbrier River Trail** for biking and hiking intersects in the MT Byway at Caldwell and the town of Lewisburg plans to connect the Trail to their in-town walking paths.

St. Albans has laid out a share the road bike/walking path thru their downtown. **City of South Charleston** has likewise made accommodations for bikes and walking paths in their parks.

The City of Charleston has a planning committee, on which MT participates, planning new bike and walking trails along the Midland Trail at Kanawha Blvd and has a long range plan of connecting bike paths throughout the City. Currently two lanes of Kanawha Blvd are closed each Sunday during the summer to allow for biking , skating and walking along the Kanawha River on the Midland Trail Byway..

Huntington likewise has a similar Planning Committee, working on a plan for their riverside development and for linking their public spaces.

The Rahall Transportation Institute has also been active in planning a **Greenway** to connect the two largest cities in WV, Charleston and Huntington, which are 50 miles apart. The Greenway, as proposed, utilizes the Midland Trail inn several places. These plans, as does ours, also contemplates signage for biking paths which parallel the road. Signs can indicate distance and length of the proposed bike route; locations of bikers’ picnic areas, rest spots, and entrances to other bike and/or hiking paths; directional information and historical informational markers for points of interest; and potential crosswalks Informational kiosks would enhance the biker’s mini-trip.

Planned Trail Widening

The Midland Trail Scenic Highway Association has gone on record as being supportive of the widening of the Byway from Shrewsbury to Montgomery. It has also indicated that historic properties and personal safety of citizens and tourists must be considered and accommodated in any road modification.

Safety and Traffic lights Needed in Tourist areas

Developing tourist attractions have created increased foot traffic in certain areas. The Byway is the Main Streets of downtown Ansted, Lewisburg, and Rainelle. In Ansted the trailhead of the Ansted Hawk’s Nest Trail crosses the Byway. Also in Malden where WV State University is developing the Booker T. Washington Institute across the road from Cabin Creek Quilts, a Midland Trail Tourist Information Center. As foot-traffic grows in these and other areas (i.e. Charleston, St. Albans and Huntington’s riverfronts, there is a need for increased signage and safety lights.

Foreign Language Signs

The Association is committed to attracting the foreign visitor, and knows that the state of West Virginia is trying to attract Canadian, Japanese, and German tourists.

Many Canadians use the WV Route 19, which intersects with the Byway at Hico and we encourage our Partners to display the Canadian flag particularly in this area. Germans are our most frequent European tourists. WV has recently gained some Spanish and Japanese speaking population, the latter of which is also fluent in English. Plans call for signs in French, German, and Spanish, where possible and necessary, with the cooperation of WV-DOH. Some MT travel materials have included welcomes in French and German. We have included requests for foreign language signage in our proposals for projects like the Hico Welcome Center.