



MAD RIVER BYWAY

Central Vermont officially designated its first “Vermont Byway” Route 100B through Moretown to Route 2 within Middlesex Village. The **Mad River Byway**, was developed within the context of Vermont’s Byway Program, under the guidance of the Vermont Scenery Preservation Council.

The popularity of Vermont’s Route 100B as a scenic road has been based on the classic landscape beauty and historic settlement pattern of the corridor it courses through and these qualities are still intact today. Classified as a rural major collector, route 100B transports tourists, residents and commercial traffic to and from I89 and the Valley. The Route has become popular with people driving for pleasure through the Valley during the off seasons as well. Attitudes regarding route 100B are evolving; the focus of travelers along the route is changing from "this road takes me to my destination and recreation," to "this road is my destination and recreation."

The Route 100B Byway Committee orchestrated a grass roots, bottoms up effort to plan, design and manage the proposed corridor. The focus for the Route 100B Byway is the local community and the preservation and enhancement of its quality of life. There is a distinct desire to capitalize on the resources present. Another highlight of this plan is the multi-modal use of the route and corridor along with the promotion of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety. The top five management and enhancement strategies that the community identified include:

1. Village sidewalks, traffic calming, and streetscape improvements;
2. Scenic view shed planning and preservation;
3. Maintain and developed pull offs and river access;
4. The implementation of a pilot program to educate and promote mutual respect between users of the highway; and
5. The development of recreation paths.

After a number of well attended public hearings with the Vermont Scenery Preservation Council and the Transportation Board, the corridor was officially designated as the Mad River Byway. The Public hearings were attended by as many as 60 residents, all showing their strong support for the designation. In addition, letters of support were gathered from area legislators, the Mad River Valley Planning District, the Mad River Valley

Chamber of Commerce, the Friends of the Mad River, other organizations, businesses, and residents.

To be eligible for the Byway Program, representatives from Moretown and Middlesex, with assistance from Steve Gladczuk from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and staff from the Agency of Transportation worked for a year to create a Corridor Management Plan.

This Plan contains an inventory and assessment of the six intrinsic qualities which a byway may celebrate, interpret, protect or enhance. These intrinsic qualities include archaeological, cultural, historic, scenic, natural and recreational resources. The proposed Route 100B Byway and its environs contain all of these resources, and collectively they are of sufficient value or quality to fully support the byway designation. The development of a byway also includes a transportation assessment, with the proviso that a proposed byway must not only facilitate tourism, recreation, and the appreciation of cultural and natural resources but that it must also continue to effectively serve the traveling public, commerce and the day to day transportation needs of the town, region and state.

This is a five year designation, after which the Moretown will have to reapply showing they have been active in developing the goals, strategies, and projects identified in the Byway Corridor Management Plan.

Designation of a Byway means that the Byway community will have access to Federal funds for preservation, programming, management and enhancements, and that is one goal of this effort. The Byway Steering Committee's first step was to submit an application to the National Scenic Byway Program. The application seeks funding to identify the special qualities of the Byway, and educate users to share/respect these resources. If successful, the grant will build way-finding & informational signage, kiosks, brochures, and develop an educational initiative. The committee is also working to organize a special event to show case the Byway and fund raise for future projects.

It also provides the constituents of the community and the region with an opportunity to create partnerships and initiatives, which facilitate the long-term management and development of the corridor in a manner that is consistent with their vision and goals.