Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia have scenic byways programs to recognize outstanding roadways as part of the National Scenic Byways Program.

Communities typically seek out the scenic byway designation by submitting a nomination application to their state department of transportation. This locally-based approach encourages communities to work closely with local and state agencies such as their state department of transportation, tourism office, and department of natural resources to preserve and promote unique local beauty and distinctive community character.

State scenic byway designation is also the first step in applying to the FHWA for National Scenic Byway designation.

**Ensuring a Strong State Scenic Byways Program**

Scenic byways are a community-based program -- making it essential that citizens work together to protect the long-term integrity and visual quality of designated roadways. The following features will contribute to the strength and effectiveness of your state's scenic byways program.

**Establish criteria for the designation** of a scenic byway based on the road's scenic, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, and/or natural qualities. These elements are intrinsic features that contribute to the character of the roadway and its communities. Basing the designation on this criteria highlights the road's outstanding qualities.

**Require a community-based corridor management plan.** Communities along the scenic byway should create a corridor management plan (CMP) to address local needs as well as user services. CMPs outline strategies for conserving and enhancing a byway's intrinsic qualities, as well as plans for the corridor's marketing, visitor management, and economic development.

**Form a state scenic byways advisory board** to advise and assist in the operation of the state scenic byways program. The board should be made up of state agencies with responsibilities related to the designation and management of scenic byways, plus not-for-profit organizations related to the promotion and development of scenic byways. The advisory board should consist of:

- the secretary of state;
- the directors of the departments of agriculture, economic development, natural resources, environmental protection, parks and recreation, and the state historic preservation office; as well as
- representatives from scenic, environmental, and historic conservation organizations.

**Require context-sensitive highway design on designated scenic byways.** Your state's department of transportation should establish standards to preserve the visual quality, scenic beauty, and distinct character of the byway in transportation decisions.

**Ensure continuity in state scenic byway designations** -- including language in the state scenic byways legislation and program guidelines to comply with the Federal regulation prohibiting new billboards on state scenic byways that are Federal-aid primary or Interstate highways. States are free to establish stricter requirements for continuous designation of a scenic byway than the minimum standards that the Federal Highway Administration has set. Without this provision, billboard companies will argue that segments of the road which contain no intrinsic qualities be excluded from the designation -- allowing them to erect billboards and ruin the continuous beauty of the byway.