



7.0 Seaway Trail Road Characteristics

In the summer of 2004, representatives of peter j. smith & company, inc., confirmed land uses and conducted an inventory of the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway in Erie County, Pennsylvania. Evaluation forms were developed to assess the landscape character, scenic quality and intrinsic resources along the Seaway Trail. These areas were mapped as the field team drove the Seaway Trail in both directions. Evaluation forms were entered into a database and onto base mapping as points to create a graphic database of the resources.

The inventory of the Seaway Trail services three main purposes:

- Determine areas for preservation, enhancement or remediation;
- Highlight areas with future development potential; and
- Serve as a resource for future efforts to market the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania.

7.1 *The Land*

The existing, observable land use of each parcel in the study area is important because it reveals the pattern of past growth, the location of areas that should be preserved, and the potential locations for future development.

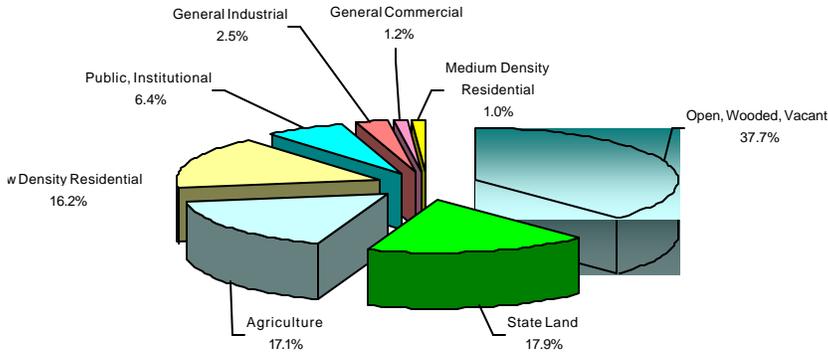
7.1.1 **Current Land Use**

The predominant land use in the Seaway Trail corridor is open, wooded and vacant land (37.7%). In this case, roads and rights of way are included in vacant land. This category does not refer to the land's development potential or availability, but specifically to its current use. Open, wooded and vacant land may not be developable because of topography, wetlands or other considerations. However, some of this land may be appropriate for development as access for recreational uses or as buffers.

The second most predominant land use is state lands. State lands include state parks, such as Presque Isle and Erie Bluffs, as well as other state properties including, for example, the state Fish Hatchery, game management areas, etc. State land comprises 17.9% of the study area.

State land is closely followed by agricultural uses (17.1%) and low density residential (16.2%). Public and institutional lands, which includes municipal and county parks, churches, cemeteries, schools, police stations, etc., accounts for 6.4% of the total. Other land uses are industrial (2.5%), general commercial (1.2%) and high density residential (1%). The following table and figure entitled existing land use depicts the proportion of land uses in the study area.

Table 7-1 - Land Use
Seaway Trail Corridor

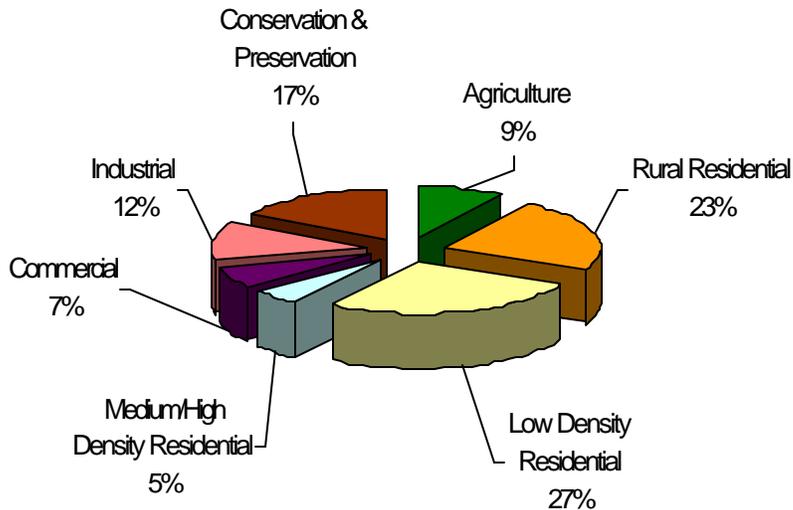


Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

7.1.2 Zoning

Residential is the most prevalent zoning among the Seaway Trail communities with 23% zoned rural residential and 27% zoned low density residential. Almost 17% of land in Seaway Trail communities is zoned for protection through preservation. The following table illustrates the zoning throughout the Seaway Trail communities.

Table 7-2 - Zoning
Seaway Trail Communities



Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.

7.2 The Road

The shore of Lake Erie in northwest Pennsylvania defines the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway. The severity of the bluff fronting the Lake is tempered by the gentle streams that wend their ways north into the Lake. The beautiful and precipitous bluff is contrasted by the sandy beaches and protected harbor of Presque Isle State Park. The landscape, too, is defined by Lake Erie, for the waters moderate the climate, making this a wonderfully diverse and productive agricultural area. Vineyards dominate the landscape with 179 of them comprising 10,399 acres in Erie County as a whole in 2002. Its bounty also includes orchard fruits, especially cherries and peaches as well as vegetables.

7.2.1 Distance from the Water

The Seaway Trail road corridor generally follows the lakeshore throughout Erie County. However, the Seaway Trail varies in its actual proximity to the water from a few feet on Presque Isle to less than 100 feet in sections of the eastern portion of the trail. On the western portion, the Seaway Trail is farther from the water. Figure 7-2, entitled Distance to the Lake, illustrates the proximity of the Seaway Trail to the water.



Close proximity to the water increases visitors' interaction with the water and understanding of the Trail. Where the Trail is farther from the water, additional effort could be required to give visitors opportunity to reach the water easily.

Close proximity to the water increases visitors' interaction with the water and understanding of the Seaway Trail. Where the Seaway Trail is farther from the water, additional effort could be required to give visitors opportunity to reach the water easily.

7.2.2 Road Conditions

An inventory of the road conditions of the Seaway Trail indicates that the Seaway Trail is in generally good condition. A field team inventoried the road, breaking it into segments. The segments were defined by the changing character of the road; for example, from rural highway to residential. The segments are of varying length.

7.2.3 Safety

Designation of the Seaway Trail as a Pennsylvania Scenic Byway ? and potential future designations of it as a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road ? are intended to: encourage additional tourist traffic and promote the use of the Seaway Trail by bicyclists.

The Seaway Trail has capacity to accept increased traffic. Throughout, the Seaway Trail features minimum 10-foot wide or wider driving lane in each direction. Additionally, the Seaway Trail includes sufficient shoulder width to accommodate bicycles. A portion of the Seaway Trail is also designated as Pennsylvania Bike Route Z. Cyclists raised issues during the public input process, including the need for bicycle trail enhancement in the East County in the vicinity of North East Township. Following the recommended route revision, bicyclists say they are likely to continue to follow Bicycle Route Z on 6th Street in Millcreek Township instead of 8th Street. Improvements proposed as part of the Futures Plan include redevelopment of the West 8th Street Streetscape, traffic calming and access.

To address traffic safety throughout the Seaway Trail corridor, traffic control devices and speed limits are employed. In fact, the speed limit is at the state limit of 55 miles per hour (mph) for just 12 miles of its length. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects in the pipeline address road replacement and upgrades with the exception of improvements planned at the intersection in the vicinity of the Erie International Airport at Tom Ridge Field. Safety Concern Areas on the Seaway Trail noted by Penn DOT include PA 5 at Route 98 in Fairview Township and portions of Alt 5 in the City of Erie.



Figure 7-1 - Seaway Trail Existing Land Use

Seaway Trail Corridor Communities





Figure 7-2 - Distance to the Lake

Seaway Trail Corridor Communities





More than 70 % of the Seaway Trail is in very good condition, scoring four or five on the five-point scale employed for the study where one is the poorest and five the highest quality roadway. The scale refers specifically to the quality of the roadway and not to the quality of the Seaway Trail experience. A detailed summary of road conditions along with photographs of the sections is found below.

For much of its length, the speed limit on the Seaway Trail is 45 miles per hour and below. Higher speed limits prevail in the portions of the Seaway Trail in the rural east and west county. Closer to the City of Erie in the center of the county, speed limits are more moderate and befitting of the residential areas through which they pass; generally 40 and 35 miles per hour. In the City of Erie the speed limit is more moderate, generally 25 or 30 miles per hour in residential and commercial areas.

Table 7-3 - Road Conditions of the Seaway Trail

Road Conditions Report

Segment Identifier	Length	Begin	End	Speed limit	Jurisdiction	Lanes	Condition	Image
R-1 Ridge Road	1.40 mi	West Lake Road	State line (OH)	45	Springfield Township	Two 12' lanes each direction; 5' shoulder westbound	4	
R-2 West Lake Road	18.20 mi	Westwood Drive	Ridge Road	40	Millcreek Township/ Fairview Township/ Girard Borough/ Lake City Borough/ Springfield Township	One 12' lane each direction; 6' shoulder each direction	4	
R-3 Peninsula Drive	0.95 mi	West Lake Avenue	Millcreek Twp Line	35	Millcreek Township	Two 12' lanes each direction; 12' median; 6' bike lane each direction	4	
R-4 Peninsula Drive	9.00 mi	Presque Isle State Park Entrance	Presque Isle Loop	25	State Park	One 11' lane each direction; median; 8' asphalt trail on west (north) side	5	

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Segment Identifier	Length	Begin	End	Speed limit	Jurisdiction	Lanes	Condition	Image
R-5 Peninsula Drive	0.35 mi	Millcreek Twp Line	Presque Isle State Park Entrance	25	State Park	21' right-of-way each direction with two lanes each; 20' +/- treed median; varying median; 8' asphalt trail	5	
R-6 Peninsula Drive		Peninsula Drive		35	Millcreek Township	Two 12' lanes each direction; 6' bike lane each direction	4	
R-7 West Lake Road	2.00 mi	Powell Avenue	Westwood Drive	35	Millcreek Township	One 12' lane each direction; 5' shoulder each direction	3	
R-8 West Lake Road	0.95 mi	Wyoming Avenue	Powell Avenue	35	City of Erie/ Millcreek Township	One 12' lane each direction; 6' trail each direction; 5' sidewalk north side; grass on south	3	
R-9 W 6th Street	2.60 mi	Bayfront Parkway	Wyoming Ave	35	City of Erie		5	



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Road Conditions Report

Segment Identifier	Length	Begin	End	Speed limit	Jurisdiction	Lanes	Condition	Image
R-10 W 6th Street	0.20 mi	Cranberry Street	Bayfront Parkway	35	City of Erie	One 12' lane each direction; 3' shoulder each direction; 5' sidewalk each direction	4	
R-11 West Bayfront Parkway	1.35 mi	Sassafras Street	Cranberry Street	35	City of Erie	One 12' lane each direction with 12' center turn lane; 6' sidewalk north; 30' retaining wall on the south	3	
R-12 West Bayfront Parkway	0.10 mi	Peach Street	Sassafras Street	35	City of Erie	One 10' lane each direction; railroad south; median of varying width north of road; 8' trail north of median	4	
R-13 West Bayfront Parkway	0.10 mi	State Street	Peach Street	35	City of Erie	One 15' lane	2	
R-14 East Bayfront Parkway	0.25 mi	Holland Street	State Street	35	City of Erie	One 10' lane each direction	3	

Table 7-3 - Road Conditions of the Seaway Trail
Road Conditions Report

Segment Identifier	Length	Begin	End	Speed limit	Jurisdiction	Lanes	Condition	Image
R-15 East Bayfront Parkway	0.75 mi	East Bay Drive	Holland Street	35	City of Erie	One 12' lane each direction with 12' center turn lane; 8' trail north side	5	
R-16 East Bayfront Parkway	0.45 mi	East 6th Street	East Bay Drive	35	City of Erie	Two 12' lanes each direction; 10' sidewalk on west side	5	
R-17 West 6th Street	0.40 mi	Cranberry Street	Plum Street	25	City of Erie	One 10' lane each direction; 5' bike trail each direction; 8' parking lane on south side	4	No image available
R-18 West 6th Street Gridley Park	0.20 mi	Plum Street	Poplar Street	25	City of Erie	Two 12' lanes; 8' shoulders in one-way park run around configuration	4	No image available
R-19 West 6th Street	1.90 mi	Poplar Street	Wayne Street	25	City of Erie	One 10' lane each direction; 5' bike trail each direction; 8' parking lane on south side	4	No image available



Table 7-3 - Road Conditions of the Seaway Trail
Road Conditions Report

Segment Identifier	Length	Begin	End	Speed limit	Jurisdiction	Lanes	Condition	Image
R-20 East 6th Street	0.75 mi	Payne Avenue	East Bayfront Parkway	25	City of Erie	One 15' lane each direction; 12' parking lane each direction; sidewalk north	4	
R-21 East Lake Road	2.25 mi	Lawrence Parkway	Payne Avenue	40	Lawrence Park Township/ City of Erie	Two 12' lanes each direction; 20' planted center median; 10' planted median south side; sidewalk	4	
R-22 East Lake Road	0.50 mi	Lowry Road/Smithson Avenue	Lawrence Parkway	35	Lawrence Park Township	One 18' lane each direction; curbs; sidewalks	4	
R-23 East Lake Road	1.15 mi	Parkside Drive/Oak Tree Court	Lowry Road/Smithson Avenue	40	Harborcreek Township	One 12' lane each direction; 5' shoulder each	4	
R-24 East Lake Road	9.25 mi	500' past Mill Street	Parkside Drive/Oak Tree Court	55	North East Township/ Harborcreek Township	One 12' lane each direction; 5' shoulder each direction	3	

Table 7-3 - Road Conditions of the Seaway Trail
Road Conditions Report

Segment Identifier	Length	Begin	End	Speed limit	Jurisdiction	Lanes	Condition	Image
R-25 East Lake Road	0.70 mi	Freeport Road	500' past Mill Street	45	North East Township	Two 12' lanes each direction; center 12' turning lane east bound, median west bound; 5' shoulder each direction	4	
R-26 East Lake Road	1.20 mi	Dill Park Road	Freeport Road	45	North East Township	Two 12' lanes each direction with 5' center median; 5' shoulder each direction		
R-27 East Lake Road	3.05 mi	State Line (NY)	Dill Park Rd	55	North East Township	Two-lane highway with 12' lanes; 5' shoulder each, shoulder on north is gravel	3	

7.2.4 Volume

Traffic volumes on the Seaway Trail predictably moderate between higher volumes near the City of Erie to lower volumes in the less urbanized outlying areas. Traffic counts are available only for those portions of the Seaway Trail that follow State Routes 5 and 5A and US 20. The latest data available are 2002 volume estimates issued for 2002 by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Traffic volumes along the Seaway Trail reach an estimated average annual daily traffic (AADT) high of 18,000 at each of two counters; one located in Lawrence Park Township at Route 5 and Iroquois Avenue; the other on Alt 5 between Powell Avenue (SR 299) and Asbury Avenue in Millcreek Township. Traffic counts are lowest on the western end of the county, in Springfield Township, where the AADT on Route 5 just east of the 5 and 20 split is more than 1,200. In the east county, with a low of just under 3,100 AADT estimated from the New York State line to the Route 89 junction in North East Township. In the City of Erie, the AADT is estimated at between 7,000 and 10,000 along the Alt 5 corridor. An AADT of nearly 23,000 is recorded for the Bayfront Parkway

The following map illustrates the estimated average annual daily traffic for the Seaway Trail corridor.

7.3 Seaway Trail Markers

Visitors to a Scenic Byway must find the route easy to follow to ensure a pleasurable trip. They must be able to find their destinations, the services and amenities they need. Visitors will come back to enjoy themselves again if they have a successful visit and signs can be a big part of assuring success and comfort.

Signage helps to keep visitors on the byway and reinforces the perception of the byway as a continuum. On the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway, trail markers are combined with kiosks and interpretive panels, proposed in the Futures Plan, to provide a continuous stream of information and wayfinding for visitors.

The repetition of the signature green and white Seaway Trail logo markers repeats a singular and unique image. Seaway Trail markers blend in with the landscape and are efficient in that they do not add visual clutter to the Seaway Trail. Seaway Trail markers are currently located throughout the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway:

- There are Seaway Trail markers facing each direction approximately two miles from the Ohio State Line.



Typical Rural Road Section



Seaway Trail Marker

- Seaway Trail markers are located in the vicinity of a proposed Gateway at Lake City and Girard boroughs. Two additional Seaway Trail Markers are located in Fairview Township.
- Seaway Trail markers are located in both directions in the vicinity of the airport. Seaway Trail markers on West 6th Street in Millcreek Township will need to be relocated to West 8th Street to reflect the revised route. These are located west of Peninsula Drive at Powell Avenue and at Peninsula Drive.

The Seaway Trail follows 6th Street through the City of Erie's historic downtown. Seaway Trail Markers are not currently placed along this portion of the corridor. While they are not entirely necessary as there are no major "decision points" along this portion, the placement of a pair of signs may be a reassuring presence.

Seaway Trail Markers in Lawrence Park Township are at the Borough line with the City of Erie and clustered at the PA 955/PA 5. A proposed Gateway could assist the signage in improving wayfinding at this spot.

The Seaway Trail in Harborcreek Township is continuous also without major "decision points." At the New York State Line, there presently is a Seaway Trail Marker. A Gateway is also proposed for this location. The following figure depicts the location of Seaway Trail markers.

7.4 Signage

A complete inventory of off-site signage along the Seaway Trail corridor was completed in August 2004. Off-site signage is defined as signage that is located away from the premises of the thing that it advertises or promotes and includes billboards licensed by the State DOT. There were 26 off-site signs identified during the inventory. The signs are generally located in three areas: West Lake Road between Pond Road in Springfield Township and Dutch Road in Fairview Township; East Lake Road in the vicinity of Freeport Road in North East Township and on Peninsula Drive.

Among the 26 signs inventoried, 11 or 42% are licensed billboards. The remaining 15 are general advertising signs. A cluster of seven signs at West Lake and Holliday Roads included real estate sign, seasonal signs advertising produce stands and a YMCA Camp Sherwin sign. The table below summarizes the off-site sign inventory for the Seaway Trail.



Table 7-4 - Off-Site Signage
Billboard, Advertising Signage

Sign Number	Location	Advertiser	Sign Type	License #
1	East Lake Road and Orchard Beach Road	Medieval Faire	Billboard	23144
2	East Lake Road and Sunset Beach Road	Lake Erie Ultimate Angler	Advertising	N/A
3	East Lake Road and Old Freeport Road	Lots Available	Advertising	N/A
4	East Lake Road and Freeport Road	Bud Light/Medieval Faire	Billboard	23146/47
5	East Lake Road and Freeport Road	Aspen Edge/Verizon	Billboard	23147/49
6	East Lake Road and Freeport Road	Penn Shores Winery	Advertising	N/A
7	West Lake Road and Dutch Road	Pet Sitting	Billboard	41117
8	West Lake Road and Dutch Road	Permanent Makeup	Billboard	41118
9	West Lake Road between Dutch Road and Pinewood Drive	Lake Erie Ultimate Angler	Billboard	41119
10	West Lake Road between Dutch Road and Pinewood Drive	Flamingo Motel	Billboard	41120
11	West Lake Road west of Eaton Road	Poor Richards	Advertising	N/A
12	West Lake Road and Avonia Road	Plantscape Greenhouses	Advertising	N/A
13	West Lake Road and Avonia Road	Electrical Works	Advertising	N/A
14	West Lake Road west of Happy Valley Road	Medieval Faire	Billboard	21004
15	West Lake Road west of Happy Valley Road	Verizon	Billboard	21005
16	West Lake Road and Holliday Road	Seasonal and semi-permanent Signs (7)	Advertising	N/A
17	West Lake Road between Rudd and Pond Roads	Medieval Faire	Billboard	21001
18	Peninsula Drive	Body Art	Advertising	N/A
19	Peninsula Drive	Splash Lagoon	Advertising	N/A
20	Peninsula Drive	Joe Booty	Advertising	N/A
21	Peninsula Drive	Priority Care	Billboard	21068

Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.





Figure 7-3 - Seaway Trail Average Annual Daily Traffic

2002 PennDOT Estimates

Source: Penn DOT/peter j. smith & company, inc.





Figure 7-4 - Seaway Trail Markers

Seaway Trail Route

