



2.0 Building the Future

The Seaway Trail in Erie County Pennsylvania is a contiguous and well-signed route, offering visitors and residents an easy to understand and predictable experience along the road itself. There are opportunities throughout to interpret and celebrate the stories of the Seaway Trail. Additionally, there are wonderful opportunities for access, both physical and visual, to the water, including Lake Erie and the streams that feed it. Gateways, loops and linkages complete the experience for the Seaway Trail visitor. To realize the potential of the Seaway Trail, a number of physical projects are planned. Together, they comprise the Futures Plan for the Seaway Trail.

A signature development, an underwater heritage park to preserve and commemorate the shipwrecks in Lake Erie, with an interpretive center and landside scuba diving center is a centerpiece of the Plan. The park and center would be unique in the northeast United States and would attract shipwreck enthusiasts, War of 1812 buffs and heritage and cultural tourists in addition to scuba divers. The unique legacy of the role of Northwestern Pennsylvania in the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 can be brought to life for visitors on through proposed improvements and development on the Erie Bluffs Visitors will they see the view from the site of Fort de la Presqu' Isle, established in 1753, when George Washington was dispatched to a sister fort, Fort Le Boeuf, in nearby Waterford, to demand that the French withdraw from the territory.

The Futures Plan also incorporates Seaway Trail Visitors Centers, Interpretive Panels and Kiosks at points and sites of interest, gateways, pullovers and other spots along the Seaway Trail. Placement of War of 1812 markers is appropriate along the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania and should be incorporated into the Seaway Trail signage where suitable. This Futures Plan suggests potential locations for some of these.



An artist's depiction of the building of Fort de la Presqu' Isle, the first of three forts in present-day Erie

2.1 Futures Plan

The Futures Plan shows how the implemented physical recommendations will play out on the landscape of the Seaway Trail scenic byway corridor. It includes a number of recommendations to be implemented throughout the trail, as well as non-physical or general recommendations. Those recommendations are:

- Establish a management entity for the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania and identify funding sources to sustain activities of the entity, including marketing and promotion
- Identify acquire, enhance scenic vistas, significant viewsheds
- Obtain conservation easements for open space preservation
- Obtain conservation easements for critical natural areas
- Take steps toward agricultural preservation in areas identified as rural resource areas per Act 249 of the PA Municipalities Planning Code
- Identify opportunities for physical and visual access to Lake Erie
- Incorporate traffic improvement elements such as roundabouts and lane reconfigurations
- Identify opportunities for preservation and interpretation of sites, structures and landscapes associated with the heritage of the Seaway Trail
- Establish a design theme for the road infrastructure of the Seaway Trail including bridge parapets, guide rails and signage, incorporating a sign hierarchy
- Establish a network of blueways for waterborne transportation and recreation
- Create a Pennsylvania Heritage Park highlighting the maritime heritage and culture of the Scenic Byway and strengthening Western Pennsylvania's relationship with the Heritage Park System
- Establish a heritage center to identify, interpret and provide access to the shipwrecks in Lake Erie along the Seaway Trail incorporating a dive center

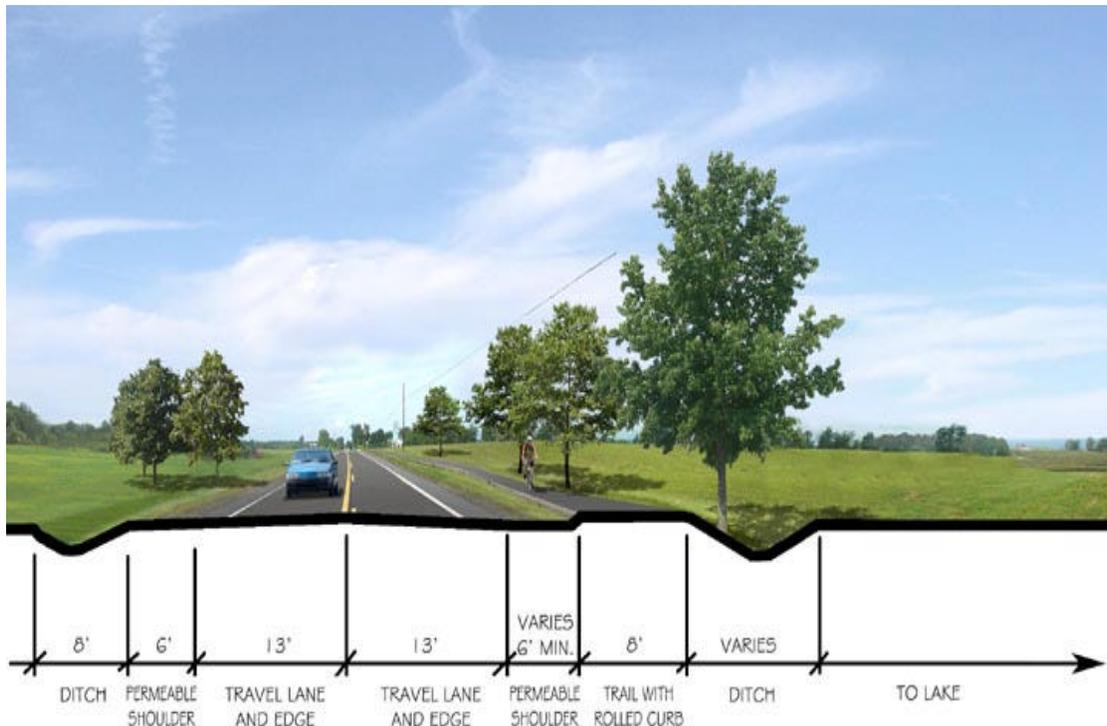
Scenic byways should be pleasurable travel experiences that offer visitors experiences they are not able to get elsewhere and that they will enjoy enough to return to experience again. Providing a predictable and reassuring route experience is a priority. The physical recommendations described above should result in a series of improvements throughout the Seaway Trail that improve its overall consistency and quality.

The illustration below depicts a typical right of way for the Seaway Trail. It features consistent lane width and a minimum six-foot separation between the vehicular driving lane and multi-purpose trail.

Following is a description of the proposed Futures Plan. It leads the reader from west to east. The numbers in parentheses refer to the map entitled "Futures Plan."

2.1.1 Springfield Township

Establishment of a **Visitors Center and Gateway (1)** located at the split of Routes 5 and 20 can provide a welcome to visitors as they cross the Ohio State line into Pennsylvania. The center could celebrate the unique identity of the character of the Scenic Byway Seaway Trail, as illustrated in the accompanying photo concept (before left, concept below), through its location in a new or renovated service-station-type structure. A **Kiosk** located on the grounds of the center, could offer visitors orientation, information and interpretation about the Seaway Trail. Inside the center, in addition to travelers aid and comfort facilities, additional printed materials, interactive exhibits and interactive computer facilities for trip planning could be located.



Typical Seaway Trail right of way



A Visitors Center and Gateway Facility at the western edge of the Trail could be an exciting redevelopment of an existing facility like the one at Routes 5&20 pictured above. Right, an artist's concept for the completed Gateway.

The **Visitors Center** is also located at the end of the **Game Lands/Raccoon Creek Scenic Loop (2)**. This loop brings travelers through the State Game Lands #314 along Lake Erie and by Raccoon Creek for an enjoyable and scenic area of the Seaway Trail well known to area anglers and hunters. Directional signage along this Loop would ensure wayfinding success for visitors. The other end of the Loop connects directly with West Lake Road on the Seaway Trail, providing additional wayfinding reassurance.

2.1.2 Lake City/Girard Boroughs

Outdoor recreation is a central part of the visitor economy in this portion of the Seaway Trail and opportunities for active and passive recreation abound. Anglers and hunters in particular are familiar with the bounty of the feeder streams to Lake Erie, like Elk Creek. At Elk Creek, **Access for Water Views** along the creek and to Lake Erie **(4)**, can increase visitors' interaction with the water. Two **Portals** here offer clear views to the east and west. Also here are three **Gateway** opportunities. First, is a **Gateway** to the new Erie Bluffs State Park **(3)**. Located at this **Gateway** could be an interpretive **Kiosk** offering information about the Park and about the unique natural setting of the Park and the animals, insects and birds that make it their home.





Another **Gateway** opportunity presents itself to help direct visitors to downtown Girard Borough **(6)**, an off-Seaway Trail destination. In Girard, visitors will find additional services and support, including post office, banks, restaurants and taverns and fuel and service stations. The **Gateway** can also direct visitors to the resources and services in the smaller community of Lake City Borough. These **Gateways** can help to strengthen the linkage between Elk Creek and Lake City **(5)**.



2.1.3 Fairview Township

As the Seaway Trail continues into Fairview Township, outdoor recreation is highlighted for anglers. A significant interpretive opportunity is presented at the Fairview Fish Culture Station and the fishing community finds anchors in two bait stores here. For first-time and casual visitors who may not be familiar with the resources here, an improved **Access Point** for recreation at Trout Run and Avonia Beach is proposed **(7)**, increasing visitors interaction with the water as well as expanding access for recreational fishing as well as for other passive and active uses.

Access to the water, both physical and visual is central to the character of the Seaway Trail. In the artist's concept, left, a typical bridge over a streambed (pictured above) is transformed into an access point for significant views and interpretation



A **Spur** from the Seaway Trail at Walnut Creek will also increase visitors' access and interaction with the creek and with Lake Erie, creating a **Portal** to the waterfront and increasing access to the creekbed (8).



Significant opportunities for access for recreation and interpretation include those the Fairview Fish Culture Station (above)

2.1.4 Millcreek Township

Millcreek Township is the transition point along the western side of the corridor between the urbanized and suburban -rural area. As the Seaway Trail enters the area of the Erie International Airport at Tom Ridge Field, the route can be somewhat confusing. A **Gateway** here (10) is proposed to serve multiple purposes.

The Gateway can become a signature for this portion of the corridor, currently typified by low-slung strip-style commercial development; it can be a wayfinding element at a critical and sometimes confusing intersection on the Seaway Trail; and it can serve as an information center for visitors entering and leaving this more urbanized area of the Seaway Trail to orient them and provide information about Seaway Trail experiences they will enjoy, services they may need and other information. For visitors leaving the more urbanized area of the Seaway Trail, the **Gateway** can provide information and orientation for the rural areas of the Seaway Trail including the location of services and attractions, incorporating a **Kiosk** or other information station.

Seaway Trail activity and investment in this area of the corridor should also focus on **Enhanced Streetscapes (11)** and bringing the Seaway Trail roadway itself into a character and profile more in keeping with the spirit of the Seaway Trail, increasing multi-modal access, improving safety for bicyclists and increasing understanding and wayfinding. These improvements will provide an incentive for private investment. The **Streetscape Enhancement** corridor extends into the City of Erie including the Seaway Trail in the City on West 8th Street.



The Perry Monument on Presque Isle sets the context for understanding of the War of 1812 and its importance to the heritage of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail

2.1.5 Presque Isle State Park

Numerous enhancements and activities are already taking place at **Presque Isle State Park**, a designated loop of the Seaway Trail. These include the **Tom Ridge Center**, a new 65,000-square-foot facility designed to provide a center for education, research, interpretation and exhibition.

Interpretive signage throughout Presque Isle State Park is an ongoing project of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which operates the park. Opportunities for additional signage and markers related to the Seaway Trail include the Seaway Trail's War of 1812 markers and Interpretive Panels that can direct visitors to the important War of 1812 sites on Presque Isle including

Graveyard Pond and Misery Bay, the Perry Monument, etc., setting the context for the heritage of the War of 1812 along the entire Seaway Trail, in New York and Pennsylvania and extending to the proposed Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Scenic Byway.

To further enhance and increase the excitement about the Center and Presque Isle State Park, a **Gateway** at West 8th Street leading up the enhanced streetscape to the Presque Isle State Park (9) entrance in Millcreek is proposed. Like the other **Gateways** proposed for the Seaway Trail, this **Gateway** can incorporate elements of wayfinding, interpretation and education. It could serve as a location for an interpretive **Kiosk**.

A **Portal** near the entrance of Presque Isle State Park can increase visitors' interaction with the water by providing visual access.

From Presque Isle State Park throughout the entire Bayfront, **Continuous Access to the Water** celebrates the heritage of the people of Northwestern Pennsylvania as well as of the Seaway Trail. Public access should be physical access where possible and visual access when physical access is not available.

2.1.6 City of Erie - Bayfront Portion

Improved wayfinding along the Seaway Trail as it splits into the Downtown and Bayfront portions (eastbound) and as it comes together from the two portions of the Seaway Trail into a single corridor (westbound) will be important elements in the future of the in both directions will help visitors find their ways. The route revision will help in wayfinding and has the added benefit of the Seaway Trail circumnavigating the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park (LEAF), an important nature and recreation attraction along the Seaway Trail and an excellent location for a possible Interpretive Panel related to the inventory of plant and animal species in the arboretum and elsewhere along the Seaway Trail, including Erie Bluffs State Park and Presque Isle State Park.

Enhancements proposed for the Bayfront Parkway include **Maritime-theme Streetscape Improvements (14)**, **Traffic Calming**, **Multi-Modal Access Improvements and Seaway Trail Development and Access**. All of these projects can culminate in a major celebration of the revitalized waterfront in the City of Erie. At State Street and the Bayfront, a **Streetscape and Gateway Enhancement (15)** is proposed to focus on pedestrian interaction between historic downtown Erie and the water. This is also a potential location for a **Kiosk** to assist in visitors' wayfinding and orientation to activities and sites along the Bayfront and in the downtown, including visitor services and amenities, restaurants, museums and interpretive centers and passive and active recreation opportunities.



Interpretive panels atop the Bicentennial Tower on Dobbins Landing help set the context for the stories of the heritage of the Seaway Trail (above). The Overlook Park, (below) will include a passive interpretive feature.



Establishment of an **underwater heritage park** designed to preserve, protect and enhance the shipwrecks, and a **land-based interpretive center and dive headquarters (16)** should be located along the Bayfront. This concept builds on the history as well as the recreation themes of the Seaway Trail. The Lake Erie Quadrangle has more wrecks than the Bermuda Triangle and is uniquely positioned to build part of its Seaway Trail tourism strategy around this opportunity.

The Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority has acquired the 23-acre bluff property along the Bayfront. It has a greenway master plan for an **Overlook Park (17)**. The proposal includes trails and a **Bayfront Trailhead Facility**, as well as a passive interpretive feature relating to the heritage of the City and County of Erie, including the French and Indian War and War of 1812 and the heritage of the **Three Flags Three Forts** legacy associated with Erie. The Overlook Park is an opportunity for a **Kiosk** location to assist in orienting visitors connections of the Bay and Bluff, to the ecology of the bluff, as well as to the role of the bluff and the Bayfront in the establishment of military forts and later, the City of Erie, on the shore of Lake Erie. **Interpretive Panels** are incorporated into the preliminary Overlook Park design. These should be consistent with and incorporate Seaway Trail design standards and elements.



Improving multi-modal access and safety are priorities. A traffic calming technique transforms the roadway, above, into a more pleasing experience in the artist's concept, right, including a separate bike trail and a pretty floral element.

On the Bayfront, **Water Gateways** and **Portals** can be enhanced and established to ensure continuous access and increase visitor interaction with the water. Specifically, the potential to improve access through improved appearance and enhancement, including redevelopment of the Chestnut Street Launch.



Connections and Access Improvements (18) are proposed for potential improvements east of the Bay Channel from the South Pier east to and including the East Avenue Boat Launch. These include improvements such as the proposed **Camping Facility** proposed for Lampe Marina at the Port of Erie South Pier; and better **Linkages and Connections** from the Bayfront District through the South Pier to the foot of East Avenue.

Bay/Bluff access and linkages are proposed to connect the General ("Mad") Anthony Wayne Blockhouse, the third Fort site high on the bluff overlooking Lake Erie at Ash and Second streets, with other maritime and heritage sites along the bluff and Bayfront.

This proposed **Access Improvement (19)** should encompass the Soldiers and Sailors Home, an historic veterans home which features park like grounds. These linkages and connections increase the visitors' interaction with the water and can increase their understanding of the maritime heritage of the Lake Erie waterfront. An **Interpretive Panel** and/or a **Kiosk** at the blockhouse and Soldiers and Sailors Home can relate information regarding the history and heritage of these sites, including the interesting if somewhat gruesome story related to General Anthony Wayne (see <http://www.americanrevolution.org/wayne.html>).

The eastern-most **Bay/Bluff connections** along the Seaway Trail in the City of Erie are for the Erie Land Lighthouse at the foot of Dunn Boulevard and the site of the former International Paper plant. Erie Land Lighthouse improvements proposed include **Improvements to the Scenic Quality (20)** of the park and grounds surrounding the lighthouse. Interpretive improvements are also proposed, which could include the potential location of a **Kiosk** at the lighthouse. Because lighthouses are large heritage tourism attractions, this is a particularly good opportunity for information on events and activities along the Seaway Trail as well as for interpretation.

While in early 2005, the future of the former International Paper industrial site on the bluff overlooking Lake Erie on the eastern edge of the City of Erie is uncertain, there is potential for **Public Access and Improvements (21)** associated with potential future enhancements. These improvements could include bluff access for passive and active recreation.

Throughout the Bayfront District, **Seaway Trail Markers** should be relocated along the Bayfront Parkway. The current markers locations predate the completion of the Bayfront Parkway and as such are confusing and inaccurate. The Bayfront District also offers plentiful opportunities for the location of **War of 1812 markers** directing visitors to important War of 1812 sites and interpretive centers including the Erie Maritime Museum, the U.S. Brig *Niagara* and Presque Isle Bay, etc.



War of 1812 markers will direct visitors to important sites like the Erie Maritime Museum, above.

Public realm improvements, such as enhanced streetscapes, could provide incentives for private landowners to implement their own, complementary, improvements

2.1.7 City of Erie - Downtown Portion

An **Interpretive Panel** could be placed at the historic Erie County Courthouse, relating the heritage of the historic downtown core as well as the history of the establishment of the City and its prominent designers. Another **Interpretive Panel** could be placed in the area of the West 6th Street Historic District and Watson Curtze Museum.



The topography of the Seaway Trail offers stunning vistas of Lake Erie. Establishment of pullovers with signage interpreting the history and ecology of the lake transform the byway, pictured above, into a pleasing and safe place to stop as depicted in the artist's concept, right.

Streetscape Enhancements (12) featuring street and landscape improvements could be implemented in the historic downtown. **Streetscape Enhancements** beginning in the City of Erie and extending through Lawrence Park Township on East 6th Street and associated roadway improvements would enhance the visitor experience through these residential and mixed-use commercial areas (13). The enhancement programs could have an added benefit of providing incentives to residential and commercial landowners to implement enhancements of their own or apply for financial assistance for these improvements.

2.1.8 Lawrence Park Township

At the intersections of PA 955 and PA 5 in Lawrence Park Township an Eastside **Gateway (22)** would add to the **Streetscape Enhancement** (see above) and celebrate the transition from city to suburb and suburb to city and increase wayfinding at a difficult and confusing intersection. Like the **Gateway** at Erie International Airport at Tom Ridge Field, this **Gateway** can function as a transitional aid between the urbanized and rural areas of the Seaway Trail.



2.1.9 Harborcreek Township

A potential scenic **Tourist Attraction** exists at Sixmile Creek in Harborcreek Township at the site of the waterfall (23). Enhancements at this spot could also include a **Kiosk** offering information about the recreation opportunities in the immediate area, including those at Sixmile, Sevenmile and Eightmile Creek and Shades Beach.

Wayfinding for those creeks can all be enhanced through **Access Improvements** for passive and active recreation. These improvements include opportunities for additional interaction with the water throughout including **Portals** for access at Sevenmile Creek and Eightmile Creek and Shades Beach (24).

A significant **Portal** and **Significant View and Overlook** could be developed on the eastern side of Harborcreek Township where views of vineyards along the steep terrain give way to dramatic views of Lake Erie (25). A pullover with a **Kiosk**, **Interpretive Panels** and other elements can be incorporated to orient visitors to the agriculture of the area, heritage of Lake Erie and of the Seaway Trail and passive and active recreation opportunities throughout the area.

2.1.10 North East Township

In North East Township, a significant **Gateway** opportunity presents itself at Route 89 and the Seaway Trail with **Tourist Attraction (26)** at the vicinity of North East Marina with access to Lake Erie and a **Byway Spur** to North East Borough. In North East Borough an **Off-Trail Destination**, a National Register Historic District is complemented by a number of visitor services and amenities including banks, service stations, restaurants, accommodations, etc.



An empty landscape, like the one pictured above, is not as welcoming as themed gateway facilities. The artist's concept, left, shows how this development can increase excitement and understanding about the byway and help to guide visitors to experiences they will enjoy and want to experience again and again.



An **Interpretive Panel** consistent with Seaway Trail panels could be placed here to interpret the significance of Halli Reid, the first woman to successfully swim from Canada to the US on Lake Erie. The Gateway can encompass the North East Marina, a major recreational boating and fishing activity center on Lake Erie.



A state line is a wonderful opportunity to re-introduce visitors to the Seaway Trail and provide an opportunity for them to preview the experiences they will have on their journey. A pullover also provides respite from the road. The artist's concept, below, shows how the Seaway Trail at the Pennsylvania/New York line, above, can be transformed.

At Twentymile Creek and the Seaway Trail, a **Portal** is proposed incorporating a **Water Gateway** and establishment of **Recreation Access** and a **Visitors Center** at an at-grade Lake Erie access point (27). Like the **Visitors Center and Gateway** located on the western edge of the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania, this **Visitors Center** could incorporate both elements of the established Seaway Trail **Kiosks, Interpretive Panels** and **Signage** with elements unique to the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania. The service station theme can be carried through here, and whatever theme is ultimately chosen for these two sites, they should be consistent. As with the Visitors Center on the Western edge, this center can feature travelers aid and comfort facilities, additional printed materials, interactive exhibits and interactive computer facilities for trip planning could be located.

At the New York State Line, a **Gateway** is proposed (28). The **Gateway** could incorporate a series of **Interpretive Panels** offering visitors orientation and information including information on the maritime heritage of Lake Erie in Western Pennsylvania, including the War of 1812, French and Indian War and Revolutionary War, agriculture, etc.





Figure 2-1 - Futures Plan

Seaway Trail Pennsylvania

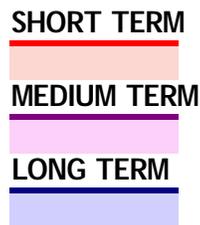




2.2 Implementation Matrix

The local organizing committee and Seaway Trail, Inc. will guide the implementation of the Futures Plan for the Seaway Trail. The tasks necessary to achieve this goal are outlined on the following pages with timeframes, parties responsible and potential funding partners.

The Implementation Matrix is color coded to indicate short-term, medium term or long-term projects:



Short term or immediate projects are those that can be completed from the planning and design standpoint and have funding in place within a one- to three-year timeframe. Medium term projects are those that can be moved into the implementation pipeline in the three- to five-year timeframe. Long-term projects are those that will require more than five years for implementation. Some projects could take significantly longer to implement as they may require additional special studies and analysis, etc.

Acronyms used in the Matrix are:

- CZM – Coastal Zone Management Program
- DCED – PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- DCNR – PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- DEP – PA Department of Environmental Protection
- LERC – Lake Erie Region Conservancy
- MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization
- NOAA –National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- NPS – National Park Service
- PDA – Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
- Penn DOT – Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- PHMC – Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
- USDA --United State Department of Agriculture



Table 2-1 - Building the Future Implementation Matrix