

To Landowners with property abutting designated *Scenic Roads* or for which applications of such designation are being sought:

What is a *Scenic Road Ordinance*?

In an effort to preserve the town's rural character, the Town of Washington has authorized the Planning Commission (Connecticut General Statutes "CGS", 7-149a) to use a *Scenic Road Ordinance* as a way to keep local rural roads as near to their present scenic condition as possible as long as they are kept safe for travel. Washington's rural highways are an important part of its history and an essential component of its character.

How do *Scenic Road's* get approved?

Owners of land abutting roads with the potential to be designated 'scenic' can apply to the town through the Planning Commission. This entails following a procedure the goal of which is to obtain the approval of landowners who represent a majority (51%) of the road frontage based on linear feet. Candidates for designation must also satisfy at least one characteristic from a set of six criteria that defines a scenic road as set forth by the state. Some of these characteristics include: being bordered by mature trees or old stone walls, offering scenic views, having any unpaved surfaces, and being of less than 20-feet in width.

Would obtaining a *Scenic Road* designation change the way in which the road is currently being maintained?

Routine maintenance such as plowing, correction of drainage problems, replacing culverts, trimming and removal of brush and trees and repair of existing paved surfaces, would continue as before. The Town of Washington can make any alterations to correct hazardous conditions or to accommodate changed development. However to widen the traveled portion, change material used on highway surface or replace engineered structures the opinions of abutting landowners will be solicited and responded to by the Selectmen.

Does the *Scenic Road Ordinance* prohibit landowners from maintaining and repairing their property abutting the scenic way?

Nothing in the Scenic Road Ordinance will prohibit a landowner from maintaining and repairing land that abuts the scenic road, as long as maintenance occurs upon their own property and not within the Town's right of way (ROW). CGS Sec. 7-149a(e) Alterations or improvements upon land that is within the ROW, which in most cases extends 25 feet in either direction from the center of the traveled portion of the road, can only be made by or with the approval of the Board of Selectmen. Work such as 'pruning, injuring, defacing shrubs or trees within the limits of the public way' without written permission of the Town Tree Warden, is forbidden and punishable by a fine. This holds whether the road is designated as Scenic or not. (CGS sec. 23-65(b)).