



Chapter 1

Introduction



Historic Route 66 (1)



Route 66 Sign



AGIS
2022/2013
Plan Area

Overview

The Route 66 Action Plan, (the Plan) is a Rank II Area and Facility Plan that covers 15 miles of Central Avenue, from 106th to Interstate 40 at Tramway Boulevard. This 15 mile stretch is the longest intact stretch of Route 66 in an urban area. Since its designation in 1926, Route 66 has offered opportunity. Initially, the road served as a lifeline connecting generations to the west and later, as an exciting road trip adventure. It is referenced as the “Mother Road,” a term penned by John Steinbeck in the *Grapes of Wrath*, as it represented the hopes, dreams and desperation of Americans.

“[T]he people are in flight, and they come into 66 from the tributary side roads, from the wagon tracks and the rutted country roads. 66 is the mother road, the road of flight.” - John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath

The Plan identifies strategic actions, developed during an extensive community planning process, which improve, enhance and celebrate the roadway’s legacy: as historic Route 66, as Albuquerque’s main street, and for the future, as a diverse, technologically advanced economic engine for the city. The Plan calls for actions that are specific to the distinct character and conditions of the corridor. In some areas, actions direct physical improvements, including pedestrian amenities, urban enhancement and catalytic redevelopment projects. In other areas, actions focus on the preservation of existing Route 66 structures, economic development and facilitating private investment. The intent of these actions is to preserve the existing assets of the Mother Road and to stimulate reinvestment in communities along Central Avenue to make Route 66 an attractive and inviting experience for both visitors and residents.

Plan Area

The Plan area includes properties which abut or are adjacent to Central Avenue. Properties that do abut or are not adjacent to Central, but possess elements that contribute to Route 66 may be considered for programs and policies of this Plan if proposed project demonstrates the following criteria:

1. Contributes to the past, present and future legacy of Route 66. Examples: neon & iconic signage, preservation of historic sites, etc.
2. Is visible from Route 66.
3. Contributes to a diverse, sustainable economy.
4. Supports the potential Route 66 has to create a thriving tourist economy.



Historic Route 66 (1)



Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library



Historic Route 66 / Central Avenue (2)

Background

Throughout its almost 100 years, Route 66 has played a vital role in Albuquerque's growth and development, driving the physical shape of the city and becoming its economic pulse. The westward migration of those seeking "the cure" for tuberculosis, escaping the Dustbowl and searching for new opportunities during the Great Depression brought people to and through Albuquerque, creating a demand for goods, services, and lodging. Later, more prosperous years brought families on vacation, military supplies and building materials along Route 66. Businesses and neighborhoods flourished on both the pre-1937 and post 1937 alignments in Albuquerque. However, the completion of I-40 and I-25 in the late 1960's and early 70's diverted traffic from Route 66 causing economic hardship for businesses dependent on vehicular traffic. The past three to four decades have seen economic decline and blight impact many of the neighborhoods and communities along the Mother Road. Once a place to be, the Mother Road has since lost some of its luster.

Recent efforts by local communities to revive commercial businesses along Route 66 have been met with great success. The Nob Hill, Edo (Huning Highlands), Downtown, International and University districts, Old Town and Atrisco communities have worked actively to revitalize their commercial cores along Central Avenue (Route 66) and have been successful in attracting new businesses and residents. The City of Albuquerque continues to work with these communities to develop public events, specialized zoning and improved infrastructure to support redevelopment efforts.

The success of these efforts, combined with the historical legacy of Route 66, has led to the City's desire to develop an action plan for the entire corridor of Route 66 within Albuquerque and stretching beyond its city limits. This need has arisen in response to the cultural and historical significance the Mother Road has played in the collective memory of local residents and visitors as well as the interest its legacy has created abroad. The actions of this plan are intended to preserve and protect the remaining cultural assets of Route 66, while ensuring that the vibrancy of communities along the Mother Road continue to thrive and attract future generations.



Purpose of the Route 66 Action Plan

The Route 66 Action Plan (the Plan) is a Rank II plan developed to inform and guide lower ranking plans and City efforts which impact development along the Central Avenue corridor. The Plan provides goals and policies which provide a framework for the preservation and redevelopment of Route 66/Central Avenue within city limits. The Plan also identifies strategic actions, projects and infrastructure improvements to the Route 66 corridor within Albuquerque and makes recommendations for additional efforts for portions of the corridor outside the City limits. The Plan calls for actions that are specific to the distinct character and conditions of identified nodes and linkages along the corridor. Future planning efforts should consider developing strategies and projects for the pre-1937 Route 66 alignment along 4th street.

Summary of the Action Plan

The Route 66 Action Plan, as a Rank II plan, is intended to guide future redevelopment projects on Central Avenue. It proposes strategies for City investment and projects to implement the goals and policies of the Plan. However, revitalization of Route 66 can only be achieved through close coordination among various City Departments, Bernalillo County, the State of New Mexico, the business community, local and national non-profit organizations, and other key stakeholders.

The success of Route 66 as a vibrant and sustainable commercial corridor is dependent on a diverse mix of uses and destinations, and a cohesive identity for the corridor built from the unique character of each district. The ultimate achievement of any program will depend on the commitment of the people who are involved.

This plan focuses on four key areas, infrastructure and transportation, streetscape, business incentives and promotion, to bring back the Mother Road to Albuquerque and to promote it as a destination for visitors, as well as great place to live, work and play.

Keeping Route 66 local as an unique and authentic experience is in the best interest of the City – not only to position Central Avenue as a destination, but to improve the economic vitality of the city. The resources allocated for economic development should consider how to encourage and support local business.

Where possible, the Plan makes recommendations for projects in conjunction with existing City infrastructure and locates new projects on City property or other Public lands in order to take full advantage of existing assets. In addition, the Plan focuses on coordinating department efforts and prioritizing projects for Central Avenue which further the goals and policies of the Plan. The Action Plan Matrix, which identifies projects and existing funding sources is included in the appendix of the Plan and will be reviewed and updated annually.



Albuquerque Route 66 Businesses (2)



Aztec and Premier motel signs (1)



Bell Trading Post (1)



Bell Trading Post Lofts (1)



Chapter 1: Introduction



Mayor Berry, Parade (3)



Working group meeting (3)



City Lab (4)



City Lab (3)



City Lab (3)

The Plan covers five City Council Districts, four County Commission Districts, 10 Metropolitan designated areas and seven adopted sector development areas which include East Gateway (2010), Nob Hill Highland (2007), University Neighborhoods (1986) East Downtown (2005), Huning Highland (1988), Downtown 2010 (2000); Downtown Neighborhoods (2012); Huning Castle and Reynolds Addition (1981), Old Town (1977), West Route 66 Sector Development (1986). In addition, two Sector plans are in development: the update to the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan and the new International District Sector Development Plan. See appendix E for other plans related to Route 66/Central Avenue.

Planning Process

ABQ the Plan. In November of 2010, in his State of the City address, Mayor Richard J. Berry introduced the idea for a plan that sets Albuquerque's long-term strategy for investing in the city and plans for a future that offers new opportunities to the community. ABQ the Plan develops a long-range plan for projects that will enhance the entire city that will:

- Spur economic development in our city,
- Increase quality of life for residents,
- Promote tourism in the metro area, and
- Promote job creation.

Route 66 Action Plan, Planning Process. In early 2011, the planning process for the Route 66 Action Plan began when the Mayor formed a Vision Team comprised of city leaders from the private sector, UNM and key city staff to brainstorm on ABQ the Plan, which was followed by a Council visioning session. The Route 66 Action Plan was among the concepts that emerged from the vision session. In 2011, the concepts were presented at over 100 events to over 3,000 people, including community groups, business organizations, government functions, town halls and summer festivals as well as on the City's website, Facebook and Twitter. In June of 2012, a consultant, Strata Design, was contracted to work with Planning staff and the Mayor's office to draft the Action Plan.

ABQ+UNM CityLab. An additional part of the Route 66 Action Plan planning process included the ABQ + UNM CityLab initiative. CityLab is a partnership between the City of Albuquerque and the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning. The City has provided the School of Architecture and Planning with a space downtown where students will work on projects in conjunction with the Route 66 Action Plan.



Chapter 2 follows with a framework for implementing the overall vision for Route 66 in Albuquerque. The following pages contain the goals, policies and actions of the Plan, focusing on five key areas:

- Historic legacy
- Infrastructure and transportation
- Public spaces
- Business and development
- Promotion and tourism



Post Card (1)



Post Card (1)



Post Card (1)