



Bringing Back the Mother Road

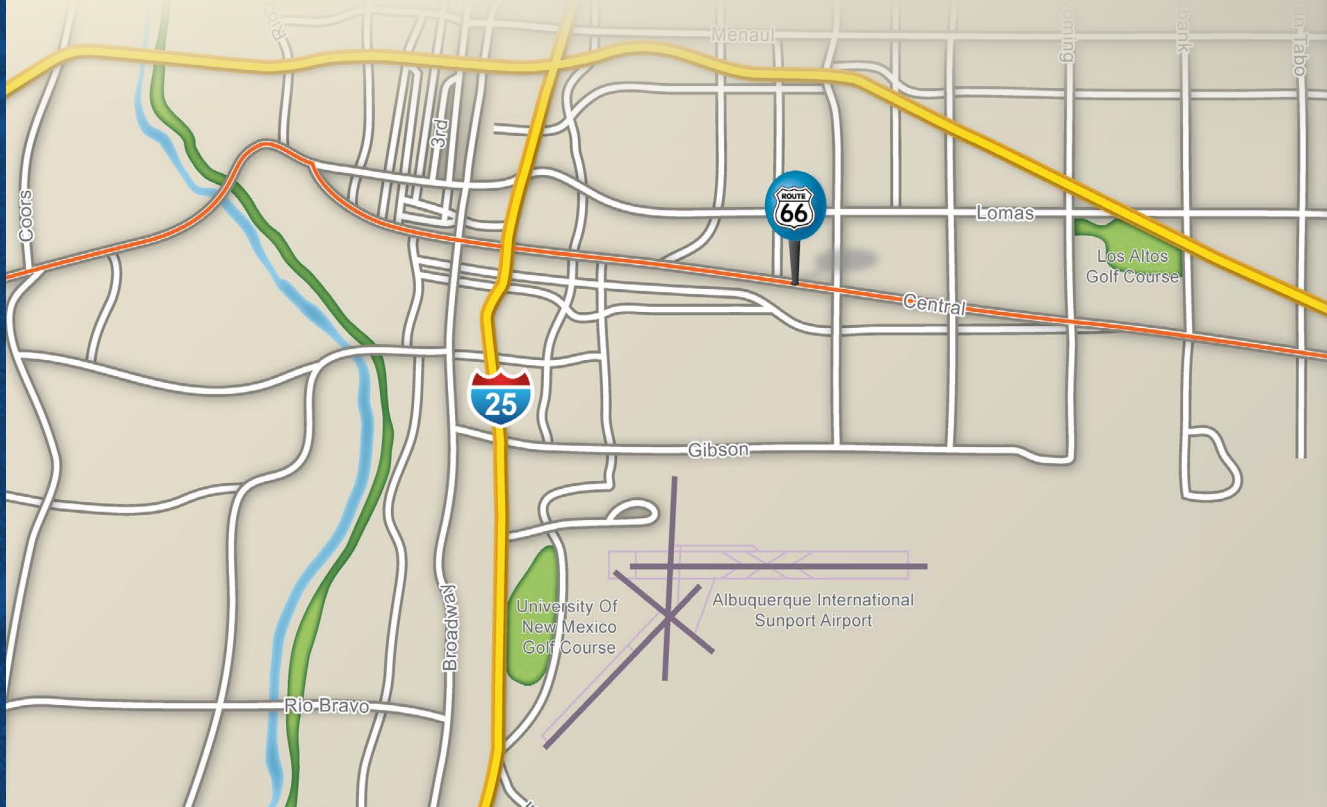
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ROUTE 66 REVITALIZATION

Bringing Back the Mother Road to Albuquerque.

The City of Albuquerque has been working with community leaders and citizen groups to write the Route 66 Action Plan, a long term plan to bring the 'Mother Road' back to Albuquerque and promote it as a destination for visitors, as well as a great place to live, work and play.

Key areas include transportation improvements, inviting streetscapes, business improvements and incentives for development, and a strong Route 66 brand and experience.







Route 66 in Downtown Albuquerque from 1958 to Present (Photo courtesy of City of Albuquerque and Marble Street Studios)

Vision

Route 66 in Albuquerque is a vibrant and rich experience for all generations; its appeal builds upon the memories of the past, contributes to the present lives of locals with an ever-evolving appeal that expands into the future.

Since its designation in 1926, Route 66 has offered opportunity: initially, a lifeline connecting generations to the west, and later, for the American family, 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 hope, dreams and desperation of Americans. Throughout its almost 100 years, Route 66 has played a vital role in Albuquerque’s growth and development, driving the landscape of the city and becoming its economic pulse.

Businesses and neighborhoods flourished on both the pre-1937 and post-1937 alignments in Albuquerque. However, the completion of Interstates 40 and 25 in the late 1960’s and early 70’s diverted traffic and consumers from Route 66. Recent efforts by local communities to revive commercial businesses along Route 66 have been met with great success. The success of these efforts, combined with the sentimental legacy of Route 66, has led to the City’s desire to develop an action plan to bring the ‘Mother Road’ back to Albuquerque and promote it as a destination for tourists, as well as locals as a great place to live, work and play.



Nob Hill (Photo courtesy of Marble Street Studios)

Goals

As a result of an extensive public participation process, the following goals have been developed for Route 66:

- **Historical Legacy:** Celebrate Route 66 for its past, present and future experiences.
- **Infrastructure and Transportation:** Ensure public infrastructure responds to current and future development needs. Develop and support an attractive, comfortable, efficient and easily accessible multi-modal transportation system.
- **Public Space:** Support real places for real people.
- **Business and Development:** Support opportunities that are catalytic for a strong and diverse business economy.
- **Promotion and Tourism:** Recognize and support the potential Route 66 has to create a thriving local and tourist economy.

Budget

Planning	\$150K
Grant (Scenic Byways)	\$150K
Additional funds needed for implementation	

Approach

These suggested investments throughout the Route 66 corridor will provide an attractive and thriving venue for doing business, recreating, dwelling, and shopping. These improvements will modernize infrastructure and create an attractive environment for both residents and tourists. These investments require a collaboration of both public and private resources and are listed below.

1. Infrastructure and Transportation

- *Digital Backbone*, adding state of the art digital infrastructure to integrate and develop new technology, and attracting high tech businesses.
- *Enhanced Transportation Level of Service*, creating a safe multi-modal corridor for cars, buses, bicycles and pedestrians.
- *Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)*, offering higher level of transit services, with faster travel times through the use of a dedicated bus lane, pre-pay boarding and easier access for pedestrians.

2. Streetscape and Public Space

- *Signage & Wayfinding*, enticing travelers from I-40 onto Route 66 to explore historic sites, attractions, and neighborhoods.
- *Streetscape Infrastructure & Amenities*, creating a comprehensive streetscape design that provides safe and comfortable places for pedestrians and all modes of transportation.
- *Public Art*, creating opportunities for public art to contribute to great public spaces, drawing visitors and reinventing Albuquerque's stretch of Route 66.
- *Neon Signage*, adding new signs to the extensive collection of neon signage and preserving and maintaining existing signs.
- *Preservation and Redevelopment of Historic Route 66 Buildings*, caring for Route 66 era buildings, such as motels, service stations and retail buildings that are iconic to the experience of Route 66.

3. Business Incentives

- *Façade Improvement Program*, encouraging improvements to existing buildings to beautify and enhance the area.
- *Minimize "Gaps" on Central*, filling in gaps and undeveloped areas with new developments that stimulate affordable housing, sustainability, and economic development.
- *Encourage and Incentivize Business Development*, making it easier to do business with the City and provide incentives for business development.
- *Attract Residential Density*, increasing residential density along Central Avenue making it the place to be – live, work and play.

4. Promotion and Tourism

- *Neighborhood Identity & Branding of Route 66*, enhancing the Route 66 identity and brand for Albuquerque.
- *Route 66 Website*, with information about Albuquerque Route 66 events and activities.
- *Visitor and Interpretive Centers*, creating visitor centers and interpretive sites to help visitors learn more about the history of the Route.
- *Special Events & Festivals*, celebrating Route 66 with special events and create new ones to attract local residents and visitors.



Historic Route 66 Photo Collage (Photo courtesy of Marble Street Studios)

Project Status

Revitalizing Route 66 was one of the initial projects suggested to be part of ABQ the Plan. The City hired a consulting firm, Strata Design, to develop a City plan to implement community based ideas and goals. A Route 66 Working Group committee was formed, consisting of representatives of various user groups and Route 66 enthusiasts. This Group was instrumental in advising the project team.

Once complete the Route 66 Action Plan will be presented to the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council for adoption. When adopted, the Plan will prioritize and regulate public investment on Route 66. There are currently no city funds allocated for this program; however, several city departments already contribute to the goals outlined in this plan.

Moving Forward

The Route 66 Action Plan is intended to serve as a master plan that is used as a reference for city planners and project managers, coordinating department efforts. The City of Albuquerque will explore various funding options and partnerships. Proposed projects will most likely be implemented in phases over several years.

Some key elements are needed to move forward with this vision for Albuquerque. Current strategies include designating a project coordinator at the City and forming a public/private Route 66 Team to identify opportunities, find funding and keep the momentum moving forward. A project plan is also being developed in order to coordinate efforts on Route 66.



ABQ^{the}PLAN

Investing in Our Future



ABQ the Plan is Albuquerque's long-term strategy for investing in the City and planning for a future with new opportunities for the community. Initially, Albuquerque's Mayor Richard J. Berry introduced the idea of having a Plan for the future of Albuquerque in his State of the City address in November of 2010. Our goal is to, together as a community, develop a long-range plan for projects that will enhance our entire city by stimulating job creation and economic development, while improving the quality of life for everyone.

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