



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

11/1/21 thru 4/30/22 Update Report & Next Steps

Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas
Chairman, Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership
May 3, 2022

Overview

Following is a brief overview of activity for the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership during the period of November 1, 2021 thru April 30, 2022. This Expanded Report is due to COVID-related constraints that have made it difficult to provide regular quarterly reports. We apologize for not being more regular in our update reports.

We believe it is important to let everyone know what the Road Ahead is doing. As you read this report, we hope you gain a better sense of what the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership is and what we are working to achieve.

We welcome and encourage feedback and questions regarding the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership in general, and this Expanded Update Report in particular. Please feel free to forward your thoughts, questions, ideas, and suggestions to: rt66theroadahead@gmail.com.

Finally, as you read this Expanded Update Report, we hope you are motivated to be even more involved in the work that awaits us on the road ahead.

Onward and upward...

Bill Thomas, Chairman
Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership

**Report on Work Undertaken on the Goals of the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership
During November 1, 2021 thru April 30, 2022, along with Next Steps Planned for the Remainder of 2022**

The goals of our organization are designed to achieve a set of desired outcomes, which in turn, are based on our mission.

The mission of the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership is:

To revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national icon and international destination, for the benefit of all Route 66 communities, travelers, and businesses/attractions, through collaborative partnerships focused on promotion, preservation, research/education, and economic development.

Following is a list of the outcomes we are working to achieve, along with the goals designed to help us achieve those outcomes. Presented below is an update on the status of each goal as of 4/30/22, along with next steps for 2022. You'll note that the current update report is highlighted in BLUE text, while past updates are in black text.

<p>Outcome 1 – Increased Collaboration: We want to improve communication and participation among and between sectors (tourism, preservation, associations, transportation, economic and community development) to leverage their work for the benefit of the entire road.</p>		
<p>BOARD OF DIRECTORS - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</p>		
GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 1.1 – Establish one professionally – led, representative body with a Board of Directors focused on achieving our organization’s set of desired outcomes designed, ultimately to accomplish our mission.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report – The pandemic derailed plans for the scheduled November 2021 Road Ahead Board of Director’s meeting. Fortunately, an in-person meeting was finally able to be held in April 2022. Nearly all members of the Board attended, along with representatives from our partner organizations, the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The meeting was held in Springfield, Missouri. Minutes will be posted on the Road Ahead website soon. It was also possible to schedule a meeting of the Research Route 66 consortium the same week, which allowed a number of Road Ahead Board members to attend the consortium’s meeting. The Research Route 66 group and the Road Ahead Directors spent time reviewing proposed strategic goals of the Research Route 66 group and identifying opportunities for collaboration between the two organizations.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: The Annual Meeting of the Road Ahead Partnership Board of Directors will be held in late November, 2021, in Springfield, Missouri. Prior to then the Board of Directors will conduct regular quarterly meetings virtually, as will the organization’s Executive Committee.</p> <p>12/31/2020 Update Report: The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Board of Directors was unable to meet face-to-face for its Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for November 2020 in Springfield.</p>	<p>Conduct an Executive Committee meeting during May 2022 and a Board of Directors during June 2022, to discuss/monitor the organization’s goals and outcomes.</p>

Outcome 1 – Increased Collaboration: We want to improve communication and participation among and between sectors (tourism, preservation, associations, transportation, economic and community development) to leverage their work for the benefit of the entire road.

STATE ASSOCIATIONS ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 1.1 – Discuss and identify Rt. 66 needs/concerns and communicate them to the Road Ahead Board of Directors. Come up with potential solutions.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: A Centennial Committee formed in Texas. The Old Route 66 Association of Texas has been engaged. Kansas state government has also expressed interest in setting up a Centennial Committee. The Gasconade Bridge project in Missouri continues to have difficulty with MODOT cooperating. Portion of Glenrio Texas have been purchased and are being restored by private entity.</p> <p>3/4/21 Update Report: Group in agreement overall that our goals continue to match our needs across the state associations.</p> <p>KS, CA, TX still struggling to get state Centennial Commission legislation moving or acted upon. MO unsure of current status. AZ moving forward with their own Commission since the state has been anemic in this regard and their cash flow situation is in a good place.</p> <p>State Associations committed to identifying ideas for Centennial "birthday presents". Some ideas proposed are restoration of dilapidated landmarks, identifying empty areas of the road that could benefit from support.</p>	<p>Work with MO Association for any kind of help that MO can use for the Gasconade Bridge. Continue working on Centennial Commission progress in AZ, CA, NM.</p>
<p>Goal 1.2 – Discuss and identify areas of common interest and opportunities to work together on projects/activities/challenges to be solved.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: OK and MO are working together on a Ribbon Road preservation committee to help guide county action and prevent unnecessary damage. A California info fair in Feb was well attended by several states. Still no IL representation in the State Associations group. Further discussion was had regarding some form of “route wide” collateral for all Associations. A sticker idea is being explored. No participation from AZ or NM in 1QTR meeting.</p> <p>3/4/21 Update Report: Proposed changing the meeting structure to a standing monthly meeting that people could join to help facilitate better participation and a more streamlined level of internal communication, which will improve external communication.</p> <p>Talked about some potential monies that the group may have to spend, generated ideas such as wooden nickels</p>	<p>Secure Illinois Association representation on the Working Group. Continue meeting monthly to identify needs and cross-Association working opportunities.</p>
<p>Goal 1.3 – Assist the Board of Directors in communicating its work with the greater Rt. 66 community.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: Grant opportunities were communicated to various Association membership via Social Media.</p>	<p>Continue monitoring legislative activity and other Road Ahead initiatives for engagement opportunities</p>

Outcome 2 – Effective Promotion: We want to promote the road and increase the number of visitors, both domestic and international, coming to Route 66, with the specific aim of increasing their length of stay and the amount of money they spend along Route 66.

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 2.1 - Ensure each Route 66 State establishes a state-level Route 66 100th Anniversary Commission</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: Illinois had its first commission meeting. Oklahoma’s next meeting is in May. No updates received from other states.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Determine how many states still need to establish Rt. 66 Centennial Commissions and if there is anything the Road Ahead Committee can do to assist.</p>
<p>Goal 2.2 - Work to identify contacts in each state that can be connected with to help influence National Route 66 Centennial Commission appointments.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: Work continues to ensure each Route 66 governor recommends someone to sit on the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April. Spoke with Lt. Governor of Oklahoma. He feels confident he can help us cultivate this list.</p>	<p>Identify key personnel in each governor's office that the Rt. 66 Road Ahead group can reach out to in an effort to help influence national appointments.</p>
<p>Goal 2.3 - Discuss ways to expand Oklahoma's AAA Route 66 Road Fest to all Rt. 66 states.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The inaugural AAA Route 66 Road Fest in Oklahoma is scheduled for June of 2022. Oklahoma will be an active participant in the event and will share the findings with the other states after the initial festival. Oklahoma shared Rt. 66 visitor data from Datafy.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Provide tourism directors with additional information following the initial AAA Oklahoma Roadfest Event.</p>
<p>Goal. 2.5 - Work to develop Rt. 66 Charging Stations infrastructure.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Road Ahead has developed a program it is calling the “Route 66 Alternative Fuels Corridor Initiative”. This idea will be proposed by the Road Ahead to the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission as a capstone project of the overall Centennial celebration.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Identify possible infrastructure money available and how to secure it for charging stations.</p>
<p>Goal 2.6 - Develop group marketing initiatives for 2026: Passport, Audio Guide, Marketing Tool Kits for industry members, etc.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Working Group discussed Passport, App, Marketing Tool Kits, and Asset Database ideas.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Discuss ideas for shared collateral. Possible funding/budget.</p>

Outcome 3 – Purposeful Preservation: We want to purposefully preserve the historic resources (i.e. buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects, and landscapes), traditions, and experiences that give Route 66 its idiosyncratic character.

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 3.1 – Collaboratively share best practices and ideas between such groups as State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and State Departments of Transportation (DOTs).</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Road Ahead’s Historic Resources Specialist, Anne Haaker, provided the following updates regarding the status of projects she is involved with and/or tracking per her Historic Resources Specialist position:</p> <p>The Illinois DOT Cultural Resources Contact The Road Ahead’s current IL DOT Cultural Resources contact has retired. Anne has connected with the new contact, Emilie Land, and introduced her to the Road Ahead Project to make sure she has access to a copies of the National Register of Historic Places documents associated with Illinois Route 66. She and Emilie discussed ongoing and upcoming projects in Illinois.</p> <p>Amarillo Helium Plant The Texas DOT continues its work to complete educational materials for the Amarillo Helium Plant and has shared all drafts with the consulting parties to review as per the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement. This relates to mitigation measures the Texas DOT is taking as a result of impacts to Route 66 near the Amarillo Helium Plan. In addition to education materials designed to interpret and tell the story of the plant’s connections to Route 66, installation of a storyboard on site is expected to be completed by May 31, 2022. Per the MOU, should excess funds remain after these initial efforts, provisions are included in the MOU for groups to apply for use of those funds.</p> <p>Oklahoma DOT Anne attended, via Zoom, a consulting party meeting concerning an OK DOT update regarding a statewide roadbed survey it is undertaking. This project is just starting, so there will be future updates.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: RAP Historic Resources Specialist (HRS) continued to participate in Section 106 consultations for State Department of Transportation projects in Illinois, Missouri, and Oklahoma.</p>	<p>RAP HRS will continue participating in current Section 106 consultations and accept new invitations.</p>
<p>Goal 3.2 – Share info about the meaning & benefits of preservation & the tools, techniques, & incentives for preservation outcomes.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Working Group (WG) will review an updated draft of the “Quick Reference Guide for Financial Incentives” in late Spring 2022.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: The Working Group had planned to submit a draft “Quick Reference Guide” to the RAP Executive Director in June 2020. There has been no change in status due to the impact of the Coronavirus. The Working Group will review the draft Quick Reference Guide again and address any needed revisions.</p>	<p>Submit draft Quick Reference Guide for Financial Incentives to the RAP Executive Director in early Summer 2022.</p>

<p>Goal 3.3 – Share information with the Board of Directors about Section 106 and the preservation of historic properties.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Working Group still needs to post the link to the Section 106 Review Guide directly on the RAP Resources page. No change.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: The link to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication: <u>Protecting Historic Properties: A Citizen’s Guide to Section 106 Review</u> is located on the Section 106 Fact Sheet (December 2, 2018), Resources page, in the Road Ahead Website. The Working Group has requested posting the link directly on the Resource page, in order to make it more easily accessible.</p>	<p>Post the link on the Resources page when the forthcoming Historic Preservation Toolkit website is posted.</p>
---	--	---

<p>Goal 3.4 – Utilize social media to share information on preservation resources and the Section 106 process, currently available on the Road Ahead Partnership website.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Preservation Working Group discussed the idea of developing a framework for posting specific preservation challenges and situations common to Route 66 stakeholders. Preliminary information is being compiled.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Develop a framework for posting specific preservation challenges and situations common to Route 66 stakeholders. No change in status for posting link to the Section 106 Review Guide directly on the RAP Resources page.</p>	<p>Submit a draft framework for review and comment by the WG in late Spring 2022.</p>
--	--	--

<p>Goal 3.5 – Develop an online “Historic Preservation Toolkit for Route 66 Communities and Property Owners”</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Consultant engaged by the Road Ahead submitted the final Route 66 Historic Preservation Toolkit to the RAP Executive Director. Preparation of a draft website is underway for posting on the RAP Resources page.</p>	<p>Finalize the draft website for posting on the RAP Resources page in early Summer 2022.</p>
---	---	--

Outcome 4 – Increased Economic Vitality: We want to act as a catalyst for community and economic development by helping sustain and strengthen existing Route 66 businesses and attractions, and by helping new ones develop.

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 4.1 – Develop a series of surveys that will engage communities and allow them to express interest in participating and/or wanting help with economic development.</p> <p>Use the surveys to gather additional statistical information from communities along the Route 66.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report The Economic Development Working Group has not meet since September of 2021. It has, however, been in contact via email. We have a meeting scheduled for the 5th of April.</p> <p>We have identified cities that will be first to be targeted by our efforts.</p>	<p>At our April meeting, we will begin combining questions for a survey.</p> <p>After questions are finalized, they will be placed into a survey.</p> <p>Our goal it to have the survey ready by the middle of 2022.</p>

<p>Goal 4.2 – Develop a simple and basic economic development tool kit that is both engaging and dynamic yet contains relatable information.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report David Knudsen has developed a starting point for our economic development tool kit. The kit is a multi-page, booklet that will be transformed into a 1-2 page document with infographics.</p>	<p>To take what David has developed and turn it in to a usable document that can be emailed, mailed, or personally presented to those decision makers within our targeted cities.</p> <p>Our goal is to have the toolkit ready by late 2022.</p>
---	--	---

Outcome 5 – Quality Research and Education: We want to ensure that the history and stories associated with Route 66 are both accurate and accessible to the public, to researchers, and to educational institutions in order to enhance and encourage greater connection to, and understanding of, the Mother Road.

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 5.1 – Establish a national Research/Education Working Group to support professional and amateur educators and researchers in their efforts to inspire and renew public understanding of Route 66.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: This group remains in place, though its members have shifted. We may be adding one or two more soon.</p> <p>3/31/21Update Report: This Working Group has been reformed with new, active members.</p>	<p>Scheduling a meeting for April 2022.</p>
<p>Goal 5.2 – Assist educational institutions at all levels in presenting Route 66 research to students, travelers, tourists, and the general public.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The last six months of this group’s effort has been to publicize the new article on the history of Route 66 with links and sources from the Oxford Research Encyclopedia by co-chairs David Dunaway and Steve Mandrogoc. And to begin work on a national National Endowment for the Humanities grant, prepared by Dr. Dunaway and Dr. McAllister. This was finally completed in March 2022. If funded 72 teachers from around the country will meet for a two, one-week sessions in training on the history of Route 66 and end by developing units for a curriculum. In addition, Drs. Mandrogoc and Dunaway have spent the last six months developing the bibliography, which now numbers nearly 200 pages. This will be published by the National Park Service.</p> <p>3/31/21Update Report: This is now an active group, led by Dr. David Dunaway and co-Chair Dr. Stephen Mandrogoc. Besides the Educator tool kits prepared earlier and being revised, the group has begun trying to identify a Research Route 66 institution that wants to serve as a National Center for Route 66; several members are exploring their institution’s perspective. We have also begun exploring grants from the NEH and the Mellon Foundation to develop a national curriculum for Route 66. In addition, Dunaway and Mandrogoc are finishing a broad historical essay of 10,000 words on the history of Route 66 for the Oxford Research Encyclopedia, which will be open to all.</p>	<p>The work is about to be sent out for review to the group and to other experts on Route 66. By our meeting in April, we should have a working draft. Then, the NPS will decide about a print run, to put this into libraries in print form for ease in researching.</p>

National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 1 – Establish a National Historic Trail Designation Task Force to secure Federal designation of Route 66 as a National Historic Trail.</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: Legislation to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail has unanimously passed out of Committee in the House and awaits a vote – hopefully per the unanimous consent process. It then still needs to be re-introduced in, and passed by, the Senate.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: Progress was not made in the last Congress to successfully pass legislation to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail. With the start of a new Congress in 2021, staff in the office of Congressman Darin LaHood [R-IL] has been working with Democratic staff from the House Natural Resources Committee to resolve differences regarding language in the Trail bill. Democrats would like energy and eminent domain language removed. Republicans wish to keep this text in the bill. The Road Ahead has communicated its desire to have the language removed in order to move the bill forward via what is now a Democrat controlled committee.</p>	<p>Ensure all possible steps are taken for the bill to pass the House and Senate during 2022.</p>

Financial Sustainment Task Force Report

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 1 – Implement a Strategic Financial Sustainment Plan for the Road Ahead</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: In January, the Board of Directors approved a new Agreement to engage The Sweeney Group throughout 2022.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: During its 1st Quarter Board of Directors teleconference meeting, the Board gave its approval to extend its agreement with The Sweeney Group, the professional fundraising organization with which it has been working since last year. Per this extension, the Sweeney Group will work with the Road Ahead’s Financial Sustainment Task Force over the next 10 months to implement the strategic fundraising campaign it has prepared.</p>	
<p>Goal 2 – Launch the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative is close to having raised enough funds to support a second round of the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program. The first round of the program was completed in May of 2021, with \$10,000 in grant awards made to eight recipients across Route 66. It is hoped a second round of the Micro-Grant program will be conducted during the summer of 2022.</p>	<p>Conduct Round 2 of the EW Micro-Grant program.</p> <p>Continue fundraising for the EW Initiative.</p>

	<p>3/31/2021 Update Report: The EW Initiative was launched in December 2020 and, to date, has raised over \$12,000. Based on this initial result, the first round of the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program was announced during 1st QTR. The program is making \$10,000 available for direct grants to women-owned and/or operated businesses and attractions along Route 66. Applications are due 4/30/21. Grant awards will be announced May 14, 2021. As additional funds are raised via the EW Initiative, subsequent rounds of the Micro-Grant Program will be announced.</p>	
<p>Goal 3 – Secure Financial Sustainment for the Road Ahead by Planning the Work of the Route 66 Centennial Commission</p>	<p>4/30/22 Update Report: The Road Ahead has done extensive preparatory work for the upcoming Route 66 Centennial – including development of an overall strategy for leveraging the road’s 100th anniversary designed to help the millions of people who live, work, and travel along the road. Areas of focus will include celebrations, commemorations, and programs/projects targeting promotion, preservation, research/education, and the economic development of Route 66. The U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission is one commissioner short of the quorum needed to hold its first meeting. The plans and proposals devised by the Road Ahead will be presented to the Commission for discussion/action at this inaugural meeting.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: The official Route 66 Centennial Commission was created via legislation signed by former President Trump on 12/23/21. The Road Ahead is taking the lead in planning the Commission’s work – as doing so is viewed as the tactic by which the organization will improve its financial sustainability. Per the strategic plan devised by The Sweeney Group, efforts are underway to secure major corporate and foundation sponsorships/partnerships. Steps to appoint members are outlined in the legislation enacted to establish the Commission. Before taking action in this regard, the Road Ahead is awaiting guidance to be printed in the Federal Register.</p>	<p>Work with the individuals/offices noted in the Commission legislation to ensure recommended appointments to the Commission are made.</p>

Conclusion

The Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership will continue to focus on national, “whole-road” issues throughout the remainder of 2022. Primary attention will be on securing National Historic Trail status, planning for the newly enacted national Route 66 Centennial Commission, and each of the other goals identified above.

We have successfully established our new organization – and we have *planned our work*. Now comes the challenging task of *working our plan*. This is not easy and it will be a long journey, but traveling it together will bring us to the destination we seek on the road ahead.

Onward and upward... Bill Thomas, Chairman - Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership