



Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group & Stakeholder Meeting
June 25, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
Albuquerque Museum
2000 Mountain Rd NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 10:11 by Chair Bill Lee.

Roll Call:

Group Members Present:

Chair Bill Lee (Chair)
Raymond Mondragon (Vice Chair)
Alicia Ortega
Elmer Torres
Evan Williams
Johnny Pena
Acting Secretary Lancing Adams (NMTD)
Angelica Trujillo (Proxy for Secretary Ricky Serna- DOT)
Daniel Zillmann (Proxy for Secretary Debra Garcia y Griego – DCA)
Daniel Gutierrez (EDD -Designate)
Deputy Secretary Danielle Gilliam (NMENV - Designate)

Group Members Not Present:

Scott Verhines

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Samantha Sengel, Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Albuquerque welcomed the Route 66 Coordination Group members and members of the public to the gathering. She stated how appreciative she was that the Coordination Group made Albuquerque a stop as the group met with stakeholders from across the state. She noted that Albuquerque City Councilors and the Mayor have been very dedicated to ensuring that Route 66 in Albuquerque is ready for the Centennial Celebration. She stated that so many folks found New Mexico as a result of Route 66, whether it was for vacation to come explore the west or if it was to come to New Mexico and make it their home. She noted that Route 66 is a

wonderful treasure that we have right here in the heart of Albuquerque that allows us to connect together on our history, on our current opportunities for business and community and tourism. She stated that it's also an opportunity for us to gather together and find a way to celebrate what we know in our history is unique to New Mexico and unique to Albuquerque. She talked about how the city has made lots of investments on Route 66 and continue to do so, whether its additional lighting or other projects that Dr. Michelle Sanchez will talk about related to signage and other items that are uniquely Route 66 in Albuquerque.

Chair Bill Lee thanked Dr. Sengel for her remarks and noted that Albuquerque City Councilors Klarissa Pena and Renee Grout were in attendance. He invited both Councilors to come up and say a few words.

Councilor Klarissa Pena addressed the Coordination Group and the public stating that New Mexico has the longest urban stretch here in Albuquerque of Route 66 and is the only place where it crosses itself. She noted that the city has been working on Route 66 for many years and that the Centennial is a unique opportunity not just for Albuquerque, but for the entire State of New Mexico. She went on to say that if we really unite and work together to improve on our assets, we already have in our communities that we can make New Mexico a destination spot for citizens and people from throughout the nation and the world. Councilor Pena note that members of the Route 66 Association and West Central Community Development Group were in attendance and thanked them for coming together to advocated for resources and dollars related to Route 66.

Councilor Renee Grout welcomed the Coordination Group and members of the public to Albuquerque and noted the large attendance and the excitement about the Centennial Celebration. She noted how beautiful New Mexico is and that she is excited to share our state's beauty with people from across the country. She stated how excited she is for the future and how she can't wait to show everybody our beautiful city.

Motion to Approve the Agenda

Chair Lee directed Coordination Group members to the next item on the agenda—approval of the agenda.

Motion by Member Johnny Pena to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Elmer Torres. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Presentations

Chair Lee noted that he was looking forward to the two formal presentations on the agenda—one from the City of Albuquerque and the other from Visit Albuquerque. He welcomed Dr. Shelle Sanchez from the City of Albuquerque to the stage to present first.

Dr. Shelle Sanchez, Director, Arts & Culture Department, City of Albuquerque, welcomed the audience and noted that the Albuquerque Museum is one of the facilities within the

Department of Arts and Culture. Dr. Sanchez noted that the city started working on the Route 66 Centennial a while ago thanks to the leadership of City Councilors, especially Councilor Pena and Councilor Grout. She noted that they have ensured not only paid attention to Route 66, but also secured funding to start figuring out Centennial planning efforts. Dr. Sanchez noted that Mayor Keller asked us all to come together and be coordinating together as departments across the city. She noted that all City departments are coordinating together and have specific projects or initiatives related to Route 66 Centennial, including Arts and Culture, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Municipal Development, Community Safety Departments, Metropolitan Redevelopment, transit, youth and family health, and housing and homelessness. Dr. Sanchez said she was going to highlight a few things the City has been working on. She noted the first conversation she had was with Visit Albuquerque, which has been their partners from the very start. She noted they also have a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and are working with them in relation to a sign project. Dr. Sanchez noted her work with University of New Mexico College of Fine Arts, National Park Service, and New Mexico Main Street. She noted that they have been working on a design for the Centennial, and it is mostly ready with a look and feel, but they have not shared it publicly because they want to roll it out with their website, which is in the final stages. She noted later this year they will be rolling out the Centennial branding with really fun merchandise, the official Centennial website, which will be hosted by Visit Albuquerque. The website will include an extensive calendar of events. Dr. Sanchez discussed that it was important for the City to have a very engaged community committee so they have included stakeholders, business owners, organizational leaders, city and community leaders from up and down the Route 66 stretch and have been meeting together regularly to provide input. She noted some of the feedback has been in the form of challenging conversations about issues like public safety and infrastructure. Dr. Sanchez noted the City's Route 66 Sign Improvement Program and Augmented Reality and Art Activations. She noted that after an open application process the Arts and Culture and Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency have identified 14 signs along Central to invest over \$400,000 in grants for restoration. She stated that most of the renovation projects will be completed in 2025. Dr. Sanchez noted that they will be adding selfie stations and other exciting art activations along the whole Route 66. She stated that they expect those to be online in advance of the 2026 Centennial. Dr. Sanchez spoke about the Albuquerque Neon Project, which is a film video series, and was funded with a grant from the National Park Service. The video series has 6 episodes and focuses on the history, preservation, manufacturing, public art and business stories from the existing signs and their owners. Dr. Sanchez noted that they are focused on two seasons of celebrations and will be launching in April of 2025 because they feel like there is a real opportunity to capitalize on two full seasons of programming leading up to the Centennial celebration. Dr. Sanchez noted that she talked about several highlights, but also provided a list of 57 things they are working on related to the Centennial celebration.

Chair Lee welcomed Tania Armenta, President and CEO, Visit Albuquerque to the stage to present.

Tania Armenta introduced herself and Visit Albuquerque as a private not-for-profit organization. She noted that Route 66 has been a focal point for their promotion of Albuquerque for the entirety of their existence. She stated that they have already started promoting the Centennial Celebration and have wrapped trains in downtown Denver, which is part of the light rail system in Denver. She noted it was introduced in February and is making its way through Denver neighborhoods and all the way up to the airport. Armenta stated that the wrap has a QR code which individuals can use to find out more about Route 66. She also spoke about how public relations and positive publicity are a major component of the marketing and communications work. She discussed participation in the IPW, which is the largest international travel trade show on American Soil, which provided a really wonderful opportunity to start talking about Route 66. Armenta noted that from her perspective that international tourism from a tourism perspective is really just the goal and a great opportunity for Albuquerque and New Mexico. She discussed partnership opportunities and how they are working with the New Mexico Tourism Department and Brand USA, which is effectively the destination organization for the entire country. She stated that Visit Albuquerque will have a microsite for the Centennial and be used for promotion and storytelling and messaging. She noted the site will have an interactive timeline, hospitality business listings along the route, and other interactive maps.

Stakeholder Input

Chair Lee invited Jason Espinoza to the stage to fill the audience in on the working group discussion instructions and how the Coordination Group will gather ideas and information.

Jason Espinoza presented on the format of the Stakeholder Meeting. He stated that each small group would spend 10 minutes per work group topic, and those individuals would start at the table matching the color of their card. He noted that every group will be able to cycle through all five work group topics. He stated that the given work group topics included: Consumer Experiences, Product Development, Marketing & Promotion, Infrastructure, and Special Events. Espinoza also noted that this is just the start of the process and that each table has copies of blank "Project Idea Worksheets" that are intended to help organize thoughts and ideas. The project idea worksheets included questions such as summary of project, new or existing project, does the project align with national strategic principles, what stakeholders/partners need to be involved, project timeline, type of financing, and how will it be sustained beyond the Centennial. He also noted that online project submission form, which can be accessed via the QR code on the screen.

Chair Lee thanked Espinoza for the instructions and encouraged folks to get started in their small groups, as well as encouraged Coordination Group members to visit each table, spend a little time, and make sure everyone is listening to the ideas that are being presented.

Espinoza and four other facilitators facilitated small group discussions with stakeholder groups on the identified work group topics and recorded project ideas and questions.

At 12:00 p.m. the stakeholder discussion wrapped up and Coordination Group members and attendees were able to eat the provided lunch. The Coordination Group was called back to order by Chairman Lee at 1:00 p.m. Chair Lee also thanked Councilor Klarissa Pena for providing a wonderful lunch.

Approval of the minutes

Chair Lee asked the Coordination Group to review the meeting minutes from Santa Rosa. There was a motion to amend the minutes to correct the spelling of Member Alicia Ortega's first name in the minutes.

Motion by Member Johnny Pena to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Member Acting Secretary Lancing Adams. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Member Updates

Chair Lee stated that they were now going to the portion of the agenda about Coordination Group Member Updates. He asked Member Evan Williams to start and for members to provide updates moving down the line.

Evan Williams stated that he did not have any updates.

Elmer Torres stated that is discussing with Chair Lee how the Coordination Group can incorporate the tribes that are along Route 66. He noted that if he has to call each individual to get their ideas and perspectives he will.

Alicia Ortega stated she did not have updates for today.

Johnny Pena noted that the Coordination Group was supposed to originally have a meeting at the Route 66 Visitors Center up on 9 Mile Hill but weren't able to due to some malfunctions in the HVAC system. He stated that after the meeting they will be taking a tour of the Visitors Center if anybody was interested in going.

Vice Chair Raymond Mondragon stated that tomorrow he, Jason, and Chair Lee would be presenting to the Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization about the activities of the Coordination Group.

Angelica Trujillo stated that NMDOT efforts going on right now include an inventory system database, which include a compilation and inventory of all the signs for Route 66 so that they can start replacing signs that are in poor condition. She asked Coordination Members to contact her if they have any areas of concern regarding signs along the highways. Trujillo also stated that they are working with the Department of Cultural Affairs to obtain artwork from local artists to create sculptures for Rattlesnake Draw Rest Area near Santa Rosa.

Last she noted that they are also working on finalizing the Centennial Plaque that the NM Transportation Department is looking to put out on the interstates.

Daniel Zillman noted that he had no updates from the Department of Cultural Affairs for the Coordination Group.

Daniel Gutierrez noted that New Mexico Mainstreet has been working with all of the Mainstreet Communities to get ready and prepared for the Centennial. He noted that he met with a filmmaker out of Los Angeles that is doing a Route 66 Centennial film. Gutierrez stated that the filmmaker wants to dedicate time to stories in each state along the route, which includes New Mexico. He noted that filmmaker has been approved by the National Centennial Commission.

Chair Lee Bill Lee noted that it was great to see the attendance in Albuquerque and that attendance has been wonderful at each of the locations. He noted that the next [stakeholder] meeting will be in Santa Fe and then Grants but noted that the Coordination Group will continue to engage with everybody along the route to make sure they are following through on great ideas. Chair Lee stated that we needed to be putting out best foot forward and doing as much as we can, as quickly as we can, putting out quality products to engage those visitors as they come through our doorsteps. He noted he skipped Member Acting Secretary Lancing Adams because he has his own spot on the agenda—Update from the Tourism Department. Chair Lee asked Acting Secretary Lancing Adams to take the floor.

New Mexico Tourism Department Update

Acting Secretary Lancing Adams stated that the Department has some very exciting news that he wants to talk about related to the Route 66 Centennial program that the Tourism Department will be launching in the next few weeks. He noted that he has discussed this in broad strokes, and the Department did receive \$2.5 million in the Legislature this year to implement a dedicated program to Route 66. Adams noted that the program goal is to celebrate and improve New Mexico's Route 66 by making it a vibrant and attractive destination for both residents and visitors. He noted several program components include marketing and promotions, infrastructure and destination enhancement, as well as support for special events. Adams stated that the Department's program is a complementary track to the work of the Coordination Group. Adams noted that they are still finalizing the numbers, but the Department is looking at dedicated \$1 million to work directly on cooperative marketing program with Brand USA to target international markets that include Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico—they are taking Brand USA's lead as the experts in this field. As part of this initiative, Adams noted that are looking into developing an interactive map. He then noted that they are looking at setting aside about \$500,000 for cooperative marketing directly to local communities. This program would be more an opt-in and would not have a match requirement. The money would go directly to local partners and potentially some tourism related nonprofits to market their region and their community. Adams noted that about \$100,000 would go to support special events, as

well as \$650,000 or so for infrastructure projects that can be completed within a year. He stated that the remainder of the money would be utilized for a campaign through New Mexico Magazine. Adams noted that they are going live with their program on July 15, 2024, and will have applications available through an platform called Submittable.

Chair Lee thanked Acting Secretary Adams for the update.

Approval of Centennial Logo

Chair Lee asked Acting Secretary Adams to talk about the Centennial Logo design and how it came to be.

Acting Secretary Adams noted that the branding is something the Department was looking at in supporting their Route 66 Centennial program. He noted it would be branding, for example, at events or infrastructure, or any number of types of activities. Acting Secretary Adams stated that if the Coordination Group desired to use the logo as part of its business that could also be part of the discussion.

Vice Chair Mondragon stated that he believes it is really important that the Coordination Group move on this and approve it. He noted that he supports this logo design.

Member Gilliam expressed his love for the logo and noted that it was super clean and felt modern, but also brings forth a classic feel to it. He stated his only commentary and maybe something could be done to address the design standards for reproduction, was that in the dates 1926 to 2026 the six at the end may look like an 8 when it's reproduced in a smaller form.

Acting Secretary Adams stated that he will be sure to discuss that with his graphics team to address.

Member Zillmann asked Acting Secretary Adams if there was an expectation through the Tourism Department's grant program that the grant recipients utilize the logo.

Acting Secretary Adams stated that the answer would be yes. He also noted that the logo is designed in a way that it can be tailored for different communities.

Motion by Vice Chair Raymond Mondragon to adopt the Route 66 Centennial Logo, seconded by Member Elmer Torres. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Approval of Scoring Criteria

Chair Lee asked Jason Espinoza and Acting Secretary Adams to weigh in on the proposed scoring criteria and how it has been formulated.

Jason Espinoza provided background on the National Centennial Commissions' seven strategic principles: celebrate and honor; preserve, protect and enhance; generate tourism

demand; tourism development; economic; national collaboration; and research and education. He also noted the four priority areas for the National Commission, which are Commemoratives and Publications, Infrastructure, Events and Celebrations, and International & National Marketing. Espinoza also provided an overview of the current project idea questions that are asked by the National Commission.

Acting Secretary Adams noted the idea was to really align our endorsement process in a way that in step with what the national group is looking for so that we end up with New Mexico products and New Mexico experiences that are going out nationally and internationally. Acting Secretary Adams noted that the first iteration of the scoring threw out some ideas and then was refined.

Chair Lee presented the final proposed scoring criteria:

Celebrate & Honor: Project honors and celebrates Route 66 by recognizing and promoting its unique history and culture. (Maximum of 10 points)

Preserve, Protect & Enhance: Project preserves, protects, and enhances the unique character of New Mexico's Route 66 communities. (Maximum of 10 points)

Generate Tourism Demand: Project drives national and international tourism through the promotion of celebrations, commemorations, and other activities that honor Route 66. (Maximum of 10 points)

Tourism Development: Project serves to develop and sustain new and existing attractions that promote tourism along Route 66. (Maximum of 10 points)

Economic Development: Project serves to enhance the economic opportunities in New Mexico, specifically in communities along Route 66. (Maximum of 10 points)

National Collaboration: Project complements the national identity of Route 66 through collaborative elements that tie in other states along Route 66. (Maximum of 10 points)

Research & Education: Project provides educational opportunities for residents and visitors to learn and explore the history of Route 66 in New Mexico. (Maximum of 10 points)

Project Feasibility & Readiness: Project can be successfully completed before the Route 66 Centennial in 2026; additionally, the community/organization has the capacity to sustain the project. (Maximum of 15 points)

Community Support: Project is supported by local government, local businesses, and other community stakeholders with a clear plan to secure government and/or private funding for the project. The community organization has the ability to sustain the project well beyond the Centennial in 2026. (Maximum of 15 points)

Chair Lee then asked Coordination Group Members for questions or comments on the proposed scoring criteria.

Vice Chair Mondragon thanked Jason and his team, as well as the Tourism Department staff for all their work in preparing the documents and the revised scoring criteria. He noted that they had the initial discussion in Tucumcari about the scoring criteria and stated that in reviewing the document that he believes it's a go. He noted that he liked that the application process is simple and noted that is a great document and we should move forward with it.

Chair Lee asked for other questions or comments.

Motion by Vice Chair Raymond Mondragon to adopt the Scoring Criteria, seconded by Member Johnny Pena. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Approval of Santa Fe Stakeholder Meeting Date

Motion by Vice Chair Raymond Mondragon to set the next meeting date for September 17, 2024, in Santa Fe, seconded by Member Johnny Pena. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Adjournment

Motion by Member Danielle Gilliam to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Johnny Pena. Motion carried; none were opposed. Chair Lee adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

Approved by Coordination Group vote at public meeting held on September 17, 2024.



Coordination Group Chair, Bill Lee