



MAIN
STREET
Now

APRIL 13-15, 2026

TULSA
OKLAHOMA



How to Leverage Heritage Tourism for Revitalization & Economic Growth in your Community



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heritage tourism

Def. traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present



HERTIAGE TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS

Route 66 Nationally:

- More than **85%** of Route 66 travelers visit historic places & museums.
- Route 66 travelers contribute between **\$38-\$79 million** annually. Scenic Byways generate between **\$250K-\$450K per mile per year** in visitor spending.
- Annual gain of 2,400 jobs, **\$90 million** in income, **\$262 million** in overall output, **\$127 million** in GDP, and **\$37 million** in tax revenues.
- **\$94 million** in annual investments for heritage preservation.

What histories
come alive by
walking your
streets?



***“Why would anyone want
to come here?”***

LOOK WITH FRESH EYES

Things to Consider

- **Cultural:** Traditions, customs, communities, events, businesses, art, music, etc.
- **Natural:** Natural resources; wildlife, birds, flowers, plants, trees, water, land, etc.
- **Built:** Architecture, buildings, structures, art, infrastructure, etc.

Kickstart Questions

- What is unexpected about my city/town/area?
- If I moved away, what would I miss? What couldn't I get anywhere else but here?
- What are my fellow citizens proud of when they talk about our city/town/area?
- What is the top 5 most recommended things to see/do in my city/town/area?
- What is recommended least? What are your hidden gems?



WHAT IS ROUTE 66?

- Historic Highway that Traverses Eight States (IL, MO, KS, OK, TX, AZ, NM, CA)
 - Begins in Chicago, IL
 - Ends in Santa Monica, CA
- Quickly became a major national commercial corridor & the gateway to some of America's greatest tourist destinations
- Federally decommissioned in 1985

OUR PLAYBOOK



FIND YOUR CHAMPIONS

Advocacy & Grassroots Organizing



ADVOCACY & GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

- **Create a Community Punch List.** Keep a list of community-driven ideas, projects, and initiatives.
- **Build relationships.** Regularly meet with elected officials and city/county staff to share your ideas, relay your concerns, and learn about upcoming projects and funding opportunities.
- **Show up.** Participate in surveys, events and initiatives gathering citizen input. *Consistency is data.*
- **Stay connected.** Follow your city/county on social media. Sign up for newsletters.



EMPOWERING CITIZEN ADVOCATES

Executive Order - Mayor Bartlett

Executive Order & Ordinance - Mayor Bynum

- 2016 – creating the Tulsa Route 66 Commission.
- 2024 - an ordinance codifying the Commission's existence and function.



SEEK DIVERSE FUNDING



VOTER INITIATIVES

Citizen Action + Advocacy = Impact

- **Sales Tax Packages**
 - Vision 2025 - \$15,000,000
 - 2006 Sales Tax - \$5,000,000
 - Improve Our Tulsa - \$500,000
 - Vision Tulsa - \$3,600,000



FUNDING STRATEGY

- **Grants**

- Oklahoma Scenic Byways - \$365,000
- Oklahoma Centennial Grants - \$800,000
- Oklahoma Route 66 Revitalization Grant - \$90,000
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) - \$12,000,000



FUNDING STRATEGY

- **Tax Increment Financing Districts/Business Improvement Districts**
 - 11th & Lewis TIF - \$23,675,000
 - Santa Fe Square TIF - \$36,200,000
 - Kendall Whittier Improvement District BID - \$300,000
- **Government Funds**
 - ARPA - \$200,000
 - Small Area Plan - \$20,000
 - Oklahoma Main Street Incentive Program - \$430,000









20 WHITTIER SQUARE 01



20 WHITTIER SQUARE 11





\$24,100,000 local sales tax
\$13,255,000 grants
\$60,175,000 tax increment financing
\$650,000 government funds

Projected total public investment between 2003 - 2026:

\$98,180,000.00

ROUTE 66 ROI

Segment	Taxable Market Value 2005	Taxable Market Value 2022	Difference
Blue Dome District	\$3,574,700	\$32,021,800	\$28,447,100
Cathedral District	\$3,115,900	\$14,594,225	\$11,478,325
Gateway District	\$5,036,700	\$7,987,600	\$2,950,900
Kendall Whittier Main Street	\$1,479,900	\$4,175,989	\$2,696,089
Meadow Gold District	\$6,051,600	\$45,567,527	\$39,515,927
Route 66 Main Street	\$1,075,300	\$4,017,600	\$2,942,300
Tulsa Market District	\$4,474,600	\$18,509,500	\$14,034,900
University District	\$5,781,900	\$12,979,440	\$7,197,540
Mingo Traffic Circle	\$2,213,600	\$3,365,000	\$1,151,400
Total	\$27,022,300	\$130,239,241	\$110,414,481



CREATE A STRATEGY



FRISCO

TEOR

4500

WORKS
IN PROGRESS

NO
SMOKING

ROUTE 66 MASTER PLANS

Route 66 Master Plan - 2005

- Grassroots Effort
- Route 66 was seen as an “untapped asset” that Tulsa could monetize & enjoy.
- Affordable entrepreneurship option aside from downtown & Brookside.
- Visionary plan implemented through capital projects and market research.

Plan 66 (update) - 2020

- Programmatic plan with a tourism focus to highlight and reap benefits of capital project investments of previous plan.

Meadow
Gold
MILK, ICE CREAM
BEATRICE FOODS CO.

Meadow
Gold
MILK, ICE CREAM
BEATRICE FOODS CO.

OKLAHOMA
US
66







TULSA



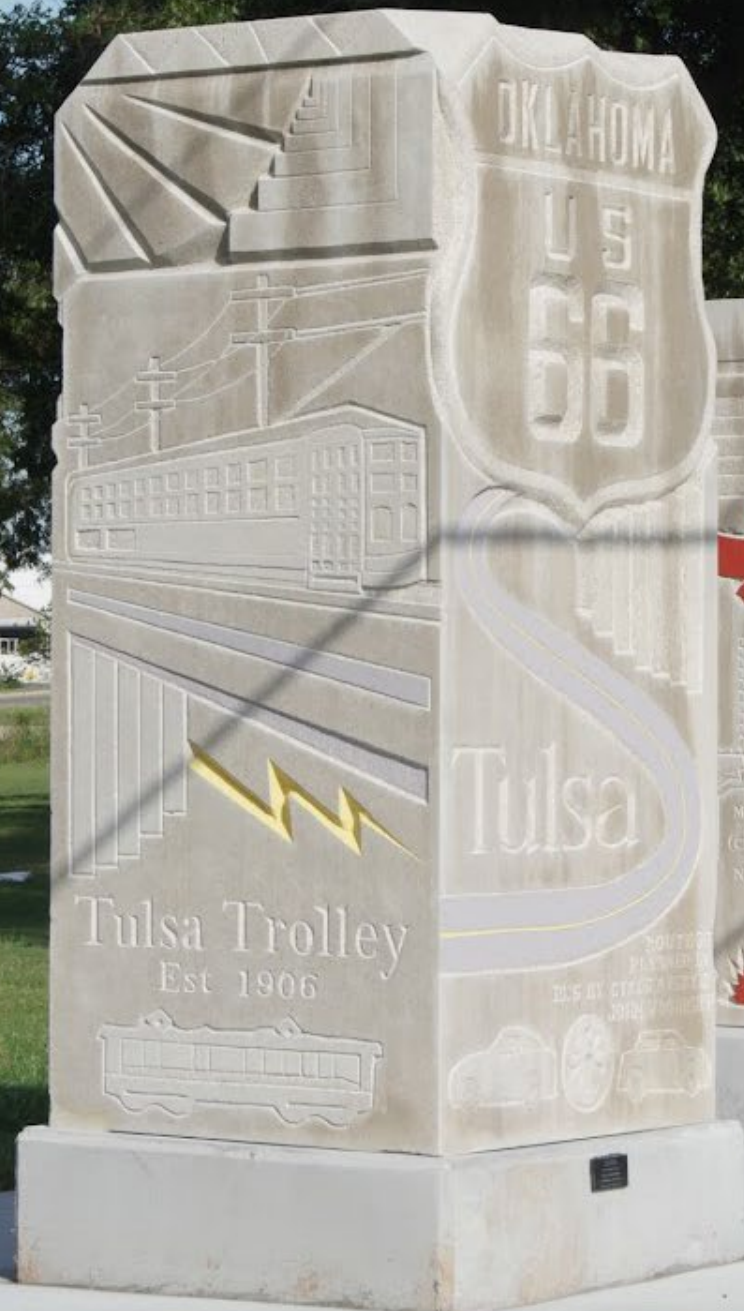


FRISCO

TULSA

ROUTE

66





TULSA

60



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PLAN 66

- Track your progress and share it publicly.
- Organize your plan into goals, strategies, and actions to encourage incremental change.
 - **Goal:** Revitalize 66
 - **Strategy:** Support established businesses and encourage further coordinated economic growth.
 - **Actions:**
 - Identify funding to assist businesses in their operations, such as matching grants, fee waivers, and low-interest loan programs.
 - Encourage the implementation of economic development designations, such as Business Improvement Districts, Destination Districts, or Tax-Increment Finance Districts to spur growth along the Route, including non-target areas.



USE EXISTING TOOLS

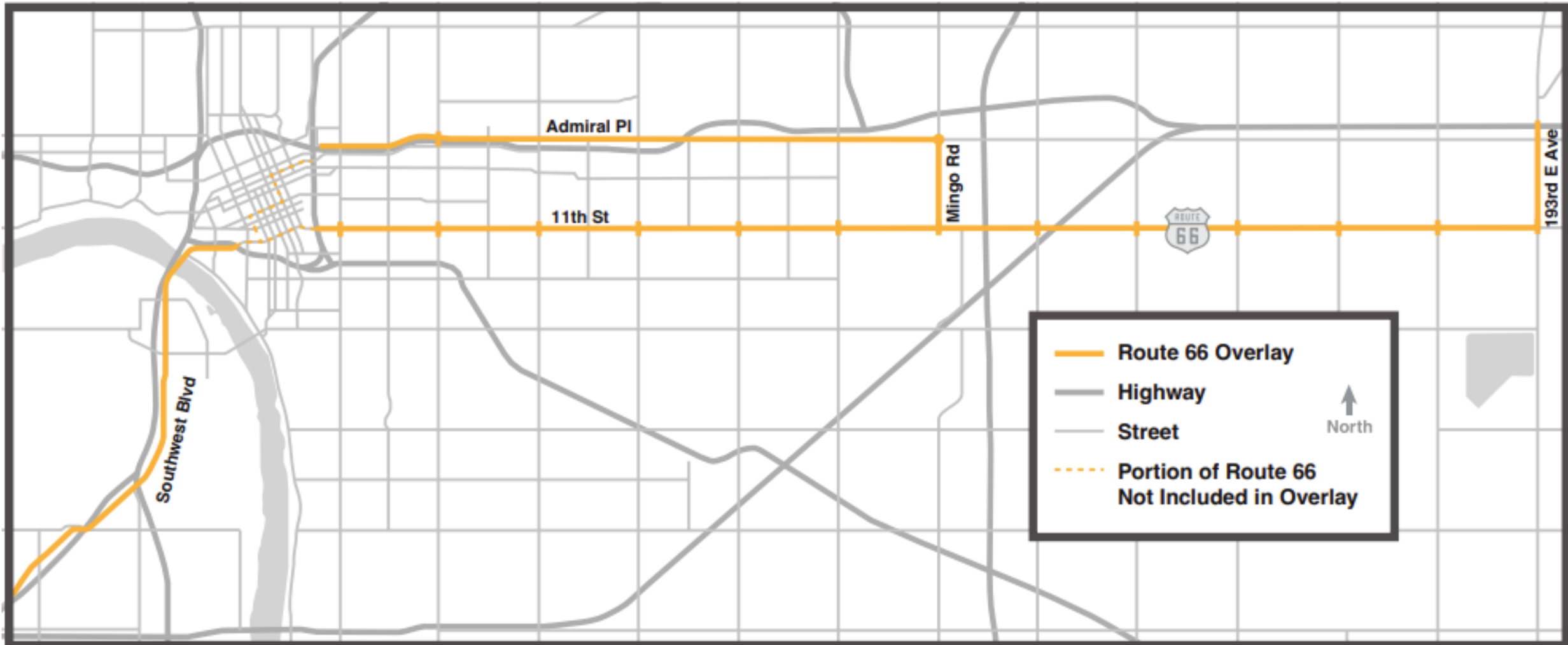
USE PLANNING TOOLS

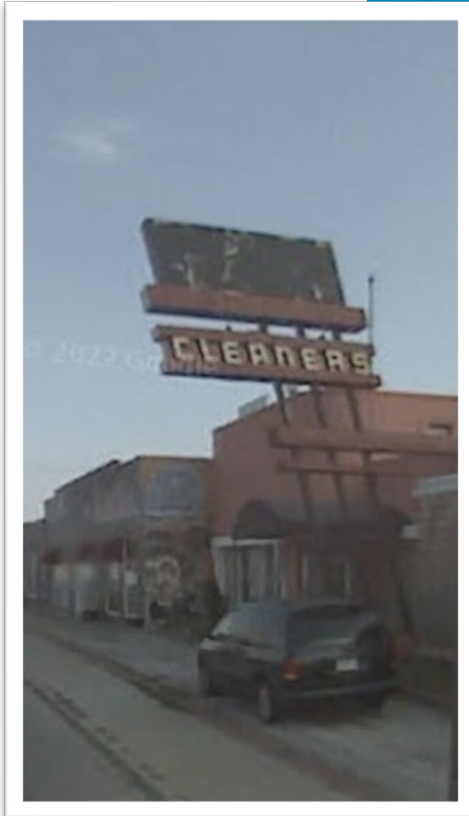


Zoning Overlay

- The overlay boundary is 300 feet on either side of each Route 66 alignment and 600 feet at arterial intersections.
- Creating an ordinance overlay set the stage for special benefits outside of normal zoning.

• OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICT •







SPEED
LIMIT
35

SANTA FE SQ.









TULSA'S OWN
MEADOW GOLD
MACK
ON ROUTE 66

ROUTE
66

MEADOW GOLD MACK
OPEN
ON ROUTE 66

Welcome
OPEN

1306 E 11th

THE GREAT
COLLEGE
TRIP
A TRAVEL EXPERIENCE



Kam R

Do It!
We Can

MEADOW
GOLD
DISTRICT

TULSA

LAND OF THE GIANTS



ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL EDITION

PASSPORT





HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Create a Preservation Culture
 - Promote your preservation wins! Use losses to promote proactive engagement with preservation efforts.
 - Create more opportunities to engage with history in public places for free (For ex. Historic markers).
 - Use code enforcement as a force for good. Collaborate with your Code Enforcement professionals to coordinate friendly sweeps with informational workshops.
 - Expand education about preservation.
 - Invest in your local trades that support preservation before key knowledge or skills are lost.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Become a **Certified Local Government**.
- Connect property owners to historic tax credits and incentives.
- Create a design guide to help property owners identify key historic features.
- Create an adaptive reuse guide to help historic properties restore responsibly.
- Work collaboratively with grassroots groups, foundations, and historical societies.





HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- **Track your historic assets and landmarks.** Detail their condition, historic status, and other important preservation information.
- **Conduct (or participate) in heritage surveys to identify all historic buildings, structures, alignments, and historical patterns.** This will also help identify properties on and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



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Gold

MILK. ICE CREAM

BEATRICE FOODS CO.



Meadow
Gold

MILK. ICE CREAM

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OMALEYB PERFORMING LIVE
6PM THURSDAY HAPPY HOURS
W / TULSA PLAY MUSIC

Stay Gold

CIRCLECINEMA



**Preserve your past to
secure your future**



DESTINATION DISTRICTS

- **Main Streets:**
 - Tulsa Route 66 Main Street
 - Kendall Whittier Main Street
- **Emerging Districts:**
 - Meadow Gold District
 - Tulsa Market District
 - Gunboat Park
 - Cathedral District
 - Gateway District
 - Blue Dome District



**STACK ON PLANNED/
FUTURE WORK**



ADD TO THE MOMENTUM

Work smarter, not harder

- Cost-share expenses across projects.
- Build in heritage tourism branding or projects to future/planned infrastructure or public service expansion projects.
- Revise policy that keeps your momentum going!



INCENTIVIZE PRIVATE INVESTMENT

AK

Adam Koloff Photography



NEON SIGN GRANT PROGRAM

50% Match Grant Up to \$10,000

- Provides a 50% match for new or restored neon signs within the Route 66 overlay or on identified parcels on the downtown alignment.
- The program requires at least 25% coverage with external tubing (neon or LED) to be eligible.
- A three-year warranty is required.



Over 90
signs since
the program
launched in
2019



FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

50% Match Grant Up to \$40,000

To help with restoration and rehabilitation of historically significant structures constructed prior to or between 1926 and 1980 (a period of significance for Route 66) along Tulsa's recognized Route 66 alignments.





ROUTE 66 SPECIAL EVENT GRANT PROGRAM

50% Match Grant Up to \$5,000

- Provides businesses, organizations, and property owners within the Route 66 Overlay or defined downtown alignments funding to produce events to encourage heritage tourism and economic development.
- To accomplish these goals, a 50% matching grant program is designed for first time events or for existing events that demonstrate an increase in capacity.

MARKETING

- Events
 - Shop 66 Saturdays
 - Route 66 Crawls
 - Route 66 Twinkle Tour
 - Scavenger Hunts
- Advertising
- StoryMaps Self-Guided Digital Tours
- City-wide assets (maps, coloring books, brochures)
- Branding & Trademarking

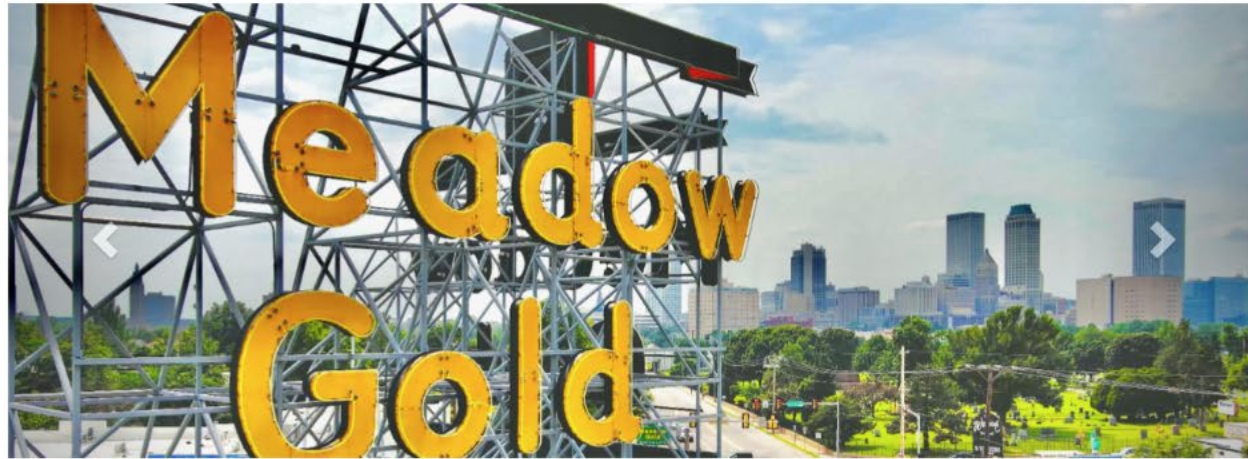


TAKEAWAYS

- Look at your community with fresh eyes. *What histories come alive on your streets?*
- Think in terms of collaboration, not competition. Learn (and borrow) from one another.
- Find & empower your champions.
- Seek diverse funding.
- Create a strategy informed by community input.
- Use existing tools and programs.
- Build off momentum & stack on planned/future work of others.
- Incentivize private investment.



Q & A

[Home](#) > [Route 66](#)

**Route 66
History**

SEE THE RICH HISTORY



**Route 66
Press Room**

READ THE LATEST NEWS



**Route 66
Commission**

LEARN ABOUT THE COMMISSION



**Route 66
Attractions**

SEE THINGS TO DO

Where East Meets West - Route 66 in Tulsa

With 28 miles of The Mother Road, Tulsa is known as the **Capital of Route 66®**. Route 66 has much of its origins in Tulsa, with Cyrus Avery, a Tulsan, being known as The Father of Route 66 for his role in the road's creation.

November 11, 2026, will mark the road's 100th year. As celebrations are planned, we invite you to see how the City is working to ensure the continued success of our stretch of the famed highway.

cityoftulsa.org/Route66





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THANK YOU!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK!

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