



# California Historic Route 66

NEEDLES TO BARSTOW CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

**FINAL DRAFT:** MAY 2015



Bureau of Land Management  
California Desert District



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Prepared for:  
Bureau of Land Management  
California Historic Route 66 Association

Prepared by  
Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, PC

in association with:

MIG, Inc.  
Thomason and Associates  
National Trust for Historic Preservation



## **Acknowledgements**

*The California Historic Route 66 Needles to Barstow Corridor Management Plan was developed through the collaborative efforts of an Ad Hoc Corridor Management Planning Committee representing each of the municipal, state, and federal agencies with an interest in the plan along with the various civic organizations and stakeholders that participated in the committee and public process.*

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*Mike Ahrens, BLM Needles Field Office  
Cliff Bandringa, Virtual Tours West  
Christney Barilla, County of San Bernardino, Land Use Services  
Kaisa Barthuli , National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program  
Sheila Beekman-Compton, CHR66A  
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Phil Crouch, Needles Best Western  
Lawrence Dale, Western America Railroad Museum  
John Dalton, BLM California Desert District\*\*  
Paula Deel, Newberry Springs CSD  
Sandra Dietl, CHR66A  
Ed Dietl, CHR66A  
Glen Duncan, CHR66A\*\*  
Siri Eggebraten, San Bernardino Co. Land Use Services Dept.  
Chris Ervin, MDCHA  
Linda Fitzpatrick, NDBA & NEDC  
Sharon Foster, CHR66A  
Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre, Mayor City of Barstow  
Jon Haeber, California Preservation Foundation  
Roger Hatheway, San Bernardino County  
Gerry Hillier, Hillier Consulting and Management  
Ken & Debra Hodkin, Rt. 66 Mother Road Museum  
Tom Hudson, County of San Bernardino, Land Use Services  
Annesley Ignatius, San Bernardino Co. Environmental and Construction  
Nancy Jackson, Southern California Edison  
Doug Lewis, San Bernardino County Dept. of Public Works  
Gaither Loewenstein, City of Barstow  
Zachary Lopez, Zachnews  
John McCarty, BLM Chief Landscape Architect\*\*  
Margo, McKee, Needles  
Mike McGath, Elementis Specialties Inc.  
Dr. Mary McNeil, Supt. Needles USD*

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Lyn Parker, Needles Chamber of Commerce  
Terri Rahhal, County of San Bernardino, Land Use Services  
Stephen Razo, BLM - California Desert District  
Robin Richards, Needles Desert Star  
April Sall, Wildlands Conservancy  
Jeff Samudio, Consultant  
Doran Sanchez, BLM\*\*  
Daryl Schendel, Calico Ghost Town  
Donald Scott,  
Gloria Scott, CalTrans, Built Environment Preservation Services Branch Chief  
Edythe Seehafer , BLM, WEMO Project Manager\*\*  
Cindy Semione, City of Needles Planning Office  
Ved Shandil, Rt. 66 Motel, Barstow  
Bob and Lana Shaw, Friends of El Garces  
Tim Silva, City of Barstow  
Andy Silva, San Bernardino County  
Linda Slater, National Park Service, Mojave National Preserve  
Tere Stamoulis, The Stamoulis Group  
Fred Stearn,  
Ted Stimpfel, CHR66A  
Katrina Symons, BLM  
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*\* The list includes people that participated in at least two CMP events or activities in support of the project. Thank you to the many others that provided additional support for the development of the CMP.*

*\*\* Members of the Core Planning Team*

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## APPENDICES

The following appendices provide background information in support of the plan. Appendices I and V are included in the print versions of the plan. All Appendices are available on line at <http://www.cmp.route66ca.org> and navigating to the Appendices.

Appendix I: Legislation and Route Description (included)

Appendix II: Maps (large file and print sizes)

- Map 1: Corridor Route Location
- Map 2: Land Ownership
- Map 3: Historic Features (3 panels)
  - West panel
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  - East panel
- Map 4: Natural Resources
- Map 5: Recreational Resources
- Map 6: Visual Resource Inventory
- Transportation Diagrams
- Land Status Map (BLM)

Appendix III: Inventory of Historic Resources

Appendix IV: Public Outreach Draft Plan Review Table

Appendix V: Implementation Table

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### ***Project Consulting Team:***

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, PC (lead)	Jim Klein, <i>Project Manager, Byway Planner</i> Cara Smith, <i>Planning and research, GIS</i> Eric Childs, <i>Planning and research</i>
MIG, Inc.	Joan Chaplick, <i>Public Outreach/Facilitation</i> Dean Apostol, <i>Visual Resource Management</i>
Thomason And Associates	Phil Thomason, <i>Preservation</i> Andra Kowalczyk Martens, <i>Preservation</i>
National Trust for Historic Preservation	Carolyn Brackett, <i>Heritage Tourism, Marketing</i>

## PREFACE

The California Historic Route 66 Corridor Management Plan: Needles to Barstow (CMP) has been prepared in accordance with Paragraph 9 of Federal Register/Vol. 60, No. 96/Thursday, May 18, 1995 (referred to as the Interim Policy) in order for the routes to be considered for nomination as National Scenic Byway from the California border east of Needles, California, generally following Interstate Route 40, US Route 95, Goffs Road and National Trails Highway to Barstow, California.

The route was designated by the State of California as Historic Route 66 in 1991, under Assembly Concurrent Resolution No.6-Relative to Route 66 (filed with Secretary of State July 11, 1991). The state designation provides the eligibility of the route to be considered for designation as an All-American Road or National Scenic Byway by the Federal Highway Administration under the Interim Policy guiding that program. According to the policy

“A corridor management plan, developed with community involvement, must be prepared for the scenic Byway corridor proposed for national designation. It should provide for the conservation and enhancement of the Byway’s intrinsic qualities as well as the promotion of tourism and economic development. The plan should provide an effective management strategy to balance these concerns while providing for the users’ enjoyment of the Byway. The corridor management plan is very important to the designation process, as it provides an understanding of how a road or highway possesses characteristics vital for designation as a National Scenic Byway or an All-American Road.”

Based on guidance provided by the Federal Highway Administration, this corridor management plan has been organized to document three core elements that must be addressed as part of the nomination process:

- Significance either regionally or nationally of the Intrinsic Quality(s) along the travel route that merit national designation
- Planning to support the preservation, enhancement and promotion of the Intrinsic Quality(s) along the travel route
- Providing for a quality visitor experience; and sustainability in the form of community and organizational support to continue to preserve, enhance and promote the travel route

The Corridor Management Plan was developed with extensive citizen input, both through the contributions of an Ad Hoc Planning Committee and through extensive public outreach efforts in support of the development of the CMP, as discussed further in Chapter 2.

The CMP is organized into the following chapters to make it easier to ascertain the core elements and the FHWA interim policy, both noted above:

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Overarching purpose of the CMP: support designation of the Route 66 corridor between Needles and Barstow as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road and guide the management of the route for heritage-tourism based economic development.

**CHAPTER 2: PLANNING CONTEXT**

Documenting the complex interagency and non-governmental management responsibilities across the desert corridor and the public outreach efforts to guide the development and implementation of the plan.

**CHAPTER 3: QUALITIES OF HISTORIC ROUTE 66**

What makes this section of Route 66 significant? Why is it important?

**CHAPTER 4: STEWARDSHIP**

Preserving historic sites and heritage and minimizing potential visual intrusions to the travel experience.

**CHAPTER 5: ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

Enhancing visitor infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism.

**CHAPTER 6: VISITOR SAFETY AND ROADWAY EXPERIENCE**

Increasing safety and roadway infrastructure to enhance the driving experience in a manner sensitive to historic context

**CHAPTER 7: MARKETING**

Developing current, consistent, and accurate information to position the route and surrounding attractions as a primary destination for target audiences

**CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION**

Building an organizational structure to implement recommended management strategies.

The Corridor Management Plan recognizes the significant challenges that must be overcome to successfully manage the route for heritage tourism—a highly competitive funding environment, serious limitations on agency personnel who might otherwise contribute more professional time, and economic hardship facing communities in the corridor and beyond. Rather than step away and let this nationally significant resource lay fallow, the CMP recommends expansion of existing partnerships and a collaborative management approach to help Route 66 communities capture the spirit that shaped Route 66 in the first place—that same optimistic spirit many Route 66 travelers had in the road’s heyday—the fascination with going west and living one’s dreams. Why not dream of a reinvented Route 66?

# 1. Introduction

Historic Route 66 is significant as the nation's first all-weather highway linking Chicago to Los Angeles. Known at the time of its establishment in November 1926, as U.S. Highway 66, the route was part of the first nationally designated highway system. Popularized in story, song, film, and urban myth, "the Mother Road," as the often romanticized highway became known

*"represents an outstanding example of the transition from dirt track to superhighway. Not only does Route 66 underscore the importance of the automobile as a technological achievement, but, perhaps equally important to the American psyche, it symbolized unprecedented freedom and mobility for every citizen who could afford to own and operate a car."*<sup>1</sup>

The California Historic Route 66 Needles to Barstow Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is part of an ongoing regional and national effort to keep America's Main Street, the 2,448-mile ribbon of highway that was once an inspiring symbol of adventure and freedom, from vanishing into the past. The California section from Needles to Barstow through the Mojave Desert is one of the most unique sections of the route—with its one-hundred twenty-eight timber trestle bridges and associated drainage features and its distinctive landscape context which has changed very little since the establishment of Route 66 in 1926.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The California Historic Route 66 Association (CHR66A) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) California Desert District have teamed up with their local and state agency and non-governmental organization partners to help preserve the history of Route 66 through the Mojave Desert. The CMP provides strategies for educating visitors about its significant cultural and natural landscape features. The effort will also look for ways to increase economic activity through enhanced recreation and heritage tourism opportunities for visitors—from near and far—through the establishment of gateway communities.

The overall goal is to create a comprehensive CMP based upon the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders with an interest in the future of Route 66 between Needles and Barstow—BLM, CHR66A, local governments, state and federal agencies, business and property owners, travel associations and the enthusiastic users of Route 66.

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program accessed at <http://www.nps.gov/rt66/HistSig/index.htm>, February 12, 2014

*A recent economic study by Rutgers University identified significant economic opportunities for small communities along Historic Route 66 through heritage tourism, but these "exciting opportunities for advancing historic preservation and economic development on the Mother Road [will] require enhanced cooperation amongst the various states and entities involved with Route 66."*

*- Route 66 Economic Impact Study, Rutgers University for the World Monuments Fund, 2011*



Figure 1 Roy's Motel and Cafe



Figure 2 Ludlow "ghost town"



Figure 3 Goffs School House

### What is a Corridor Management Plan?

*Guidance for the development of the CMP is provided by the National Scenic Byways Program Interim Policy Document (May 18, 1995) which states that:*

*A corridor management plan, developed with community involvement, must be prepared for the scenic byway corridor proposed for national designation. It should provide for the conservation and enhancement of the byway's intrinsic qualities as well as the promotion of tourism and economic development. The plan should provide an effective management strategy to balance these concerns while providing for the users' enjoyment of the byway. The corridor management plan is very important to the designation process, as it provides an understanding of how a road or highway possesses characteristics vital for designation as a National Scenic Byway or an All-American Road.*



Figure 4 Daggett Garage

The CMP is intended to serve as the basis for nominating the route for National Scenic Byway or All American Road designation. Four of the eight Route 66 states (Illinois, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona) have already been so designated. Missouri and Kansas have completed a corridor management plan and intend to nominate their portions of the route. The Arroyo Seco Parkway in southern California, officially designated as part of Route 66 in 1940, has a completed CMP. Funding is being pursued to prepare CMP's for the remaining sections of California's Route 66. Texas does not have a state scenic byway program.

As a plan for byway management, the CMP meets requirements of a scenic byway corridor management plan and will support future nomination of the route as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road through the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National Scenic Byways Program<sup>2</sup>. In order to be nominated for a National Scenic Byway, a CMP must address fourteen points spelled out in the Program's Interim Policy Document (an additional four points are required for All-American Road). Table 1 lists the requirements for National Scenic Byway designation and the chapters where that requirement can be found in the plan. All-American Road requirements are addressed in Chapter 8.

The project is funded by a grant to the BLM California Desert District and the California Historic Route 66 Association (CHR66A) from FHWA's National Scenic Byway Program. Other key partners include the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, San Bernardino County, the City of Needles, the City of Barstow, CalTrans, the California Preservation Foundation, and Visit California, among others.

## CORRIDOR BOUNDARIES

The Historic Route 66 corridor boundary includes three distinct elements: the Route 66 travel route; the lands that can be seen from the travel route (corridor width); and places to visit associated with Historic Route 66 themes.

### THE TRAVEL ROUTE

The travel route covered by the CMP includes portions of former U.S. Highway Route 66 between the Colorado River and the western boundary of Barstow referred to as the "official travel route" in the *Route 66 EZ Guide for Travelers* by Jerry McClanahan. The official travel route is referred to as "Historic Route 66" or "the route" in the CMP.

<sup>2</sup> National Scenic Byways Program Interim Policy Document (May 18, 1995) accessed at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1995-05-18/html/95-12211.htm>, January 15, 2015

Table 1 Federal Requirement for a Corridor Management Plan	Chapter and Page Reference
(1) A map identifying the corridor boundaries and the location of intrinsic qualities and different land uses within the corridor.	<i>Appendix II, Maps</i>
(2) An assessment of such intrinsic qualities and of their context.	<i>“Qualities of Historic Route 66” on page 27</i>
(3) A strategy for maintaining and enhancing those intrinsic qualities. The level of protection for different parts of a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road can vary, with the highest level of protection afforded those parts which most reflect their intrinsic values. All nationally recognized scenic byways should, however, be maintained with particularly high standards, not only for travelers’ safety and comfort, but also for preserving the highest levels of visual integrity and attractiveness.	<i>“Stewardship” on page 69</i>
(4) A schedule and a listing of all agency, group, and individual responsibilities in the implementation of the corridor management plan, and a description of enforcement and review mechanisms, including a schedule for the continuing review of how well those responsibilities are being met.	<i>“Implementation” on page 163 and Appendix VI</i>
(5) A strategy describing how existing development might be enhanced and new development might be accommodated while still preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor.	<i>“Conservation and Preservation Implementation Tools” on page 79</i>
(6) A plan to assure on-going public participation in the implementation of corridor management objectives.	<i>“Implementation” on page 163</i>
(7) A general review of the road’s or highway’s safety and accident record to identify any correctable faults in highway design, maintenance, or operation.	<i>“Visitor Safety and Roadway Experience” on page 121</i>
(8) A plan to accommodate commerce while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service, including convenient user facilities.	<i>“Enhancing the Visitor Experience” on page 107 and, “Visitor Safety and Roadway Experience” on page 121</i>
(9) A demonstration that intrusions on the visitor experience have been minimized to the extent feasible, and a plan for making improvements to enhance that experience.	<i>“Conservation and Preservation Implementation Tools” on page 79 and “Enhancing the Visitor Experience” on page 107</i>
(10) A demonstration of compliance with all existing local, State, and Federal laws on the control of outdoor advertising.	<i>“Designation of Route 66 as a County Scenic Route” on page 16, “City of Needles” on page 17 and “City of Barstow” on page 18</i>
(11) A signage plan that demonstrates how the State will ensure and make the number and placement of signs more supportive of the visitor experience.	<i>“Signage” on page 137</i>
(12) A narrative describing how the National Scenic Byway will be positioned for marketing.	<i>“Marketing” on page 139</i>
(13) A discussion of design standards relating to any proposed modification of the roadway. This discussion should include an evaluation of how the proposed changes may affect the intrinsic qualities of the byway corridor.	<i>“Strategies for Preserving and maintaining character-defining features” on page 122</i>
(14) A description of plans to interpret the significant resources of the scenic byway.	<i>“5. Develop innovative ways to tell the Route 66 story” on page 115</i>



Figure 5 Corridor Definition map

For large size map of the corridor please see Map 1: Corridor Route Location at <http://cmp.route66ca.org> and navigate to “Appendix II: Maps”



Figure 6 Welcome Sign



Figure 7 Route 66 insignia on roadway



Figure 8 View from Ludlow Dairy Queen looking north

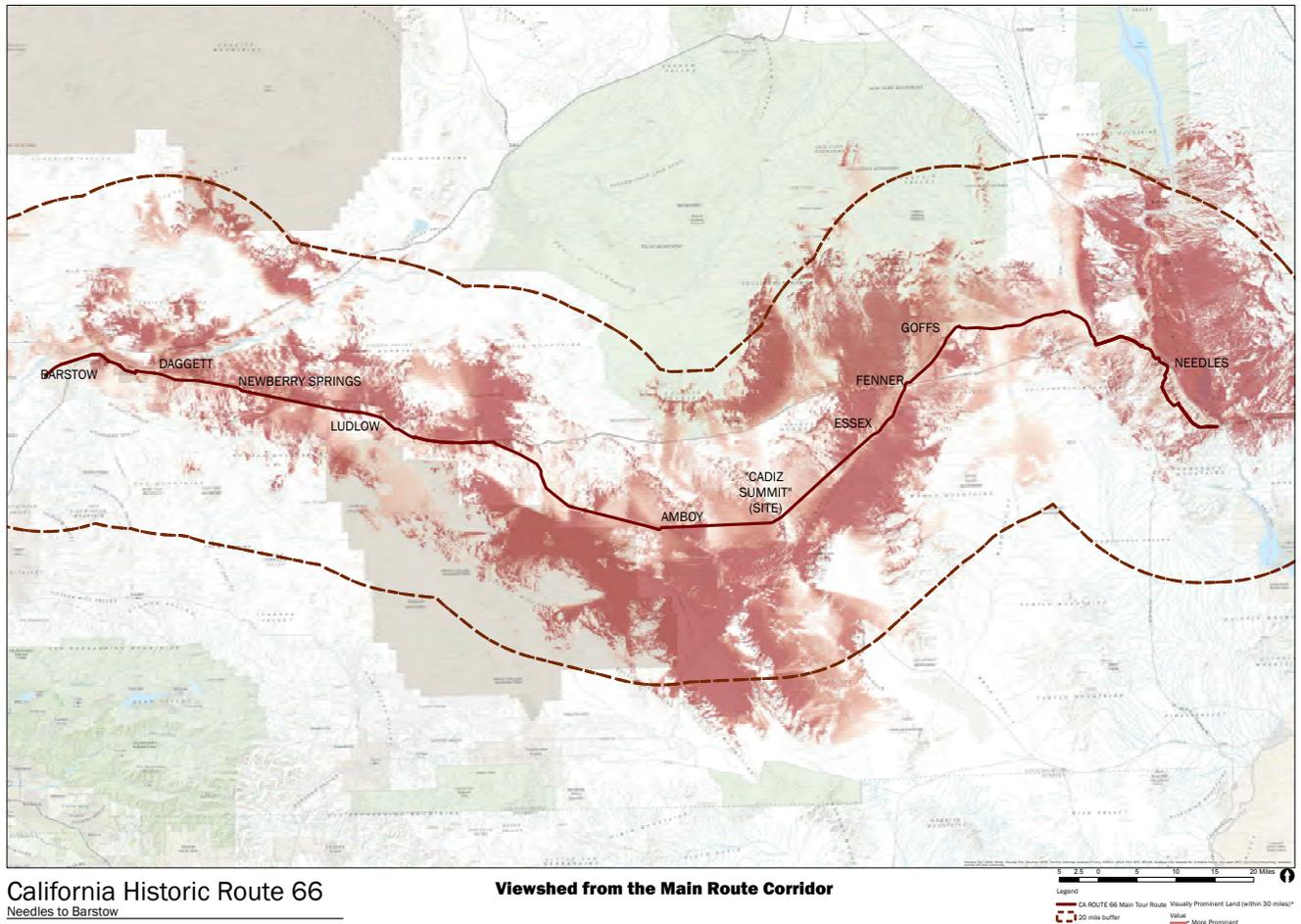
Conditions change frequently through the desert portions of Historic Route 66. The *EZ Guide* is a frequently updated and commonly used travel guide for international visitors. The *EZ Guide* references side trips and former alignments. These are noted, but not adopted as the official route. See “Related Places to Visit Nearby (Side Trips)” on page 7.

The route is managed by four different agencies. Appendix I provides specific turn by turn directions for the route and the agencies that are responsible for the road and associated right-of-way. CalTrans is responsible for portions of the route that overlay with U.S. Route 95 and I-40. The City of Needles and City of Barstow are responsible for portions of the route that fall within their boundaries. The remaining portions of the route are the responsibility of San Bernardino County. Where the route traverses private lands, the County right-of-way width varies. Where the route traverses land managed by BLM (from approximately one-half mile west of Mountain Springs Road to two miles east of Ludlow) the County has been granted a 400’ wide “maintenance corridor.”

For the areas east of the Five Mile Road exit (east of Needles), lands managed by BLM’s Lake Havasu Field Office of the Colorado River District are excluded from the corridor. For continuity with Arizona’s Route 66, an All-American Road, the route follows the Interstate 40 right-of-way, which overlays the Historic Route 66 travel route in this section. A map of these lands is included in Appendix I.

**CORRIDOR WIDTH**

The corridor is defined as the lands visible from the travel route—referred to as the viewshed. The purpose of including the broader viewshed within the purview of the CMP is to identify those lands and features that shape the travel experience and provide the context for Route 66 as a nationally and internationally significant historic resource. Figure 9 illustrates the viewshed concept and identifies lands that can be seen 30-miles from the route, which formed the starting point for determining the corridor width. According to FHWA guidance, the CMP must demonstrate how changes to the travel experience will be managed in a positive way.



California Historic Route 66  
Needles to Barstow

Viewshed from the Main Route Corridor

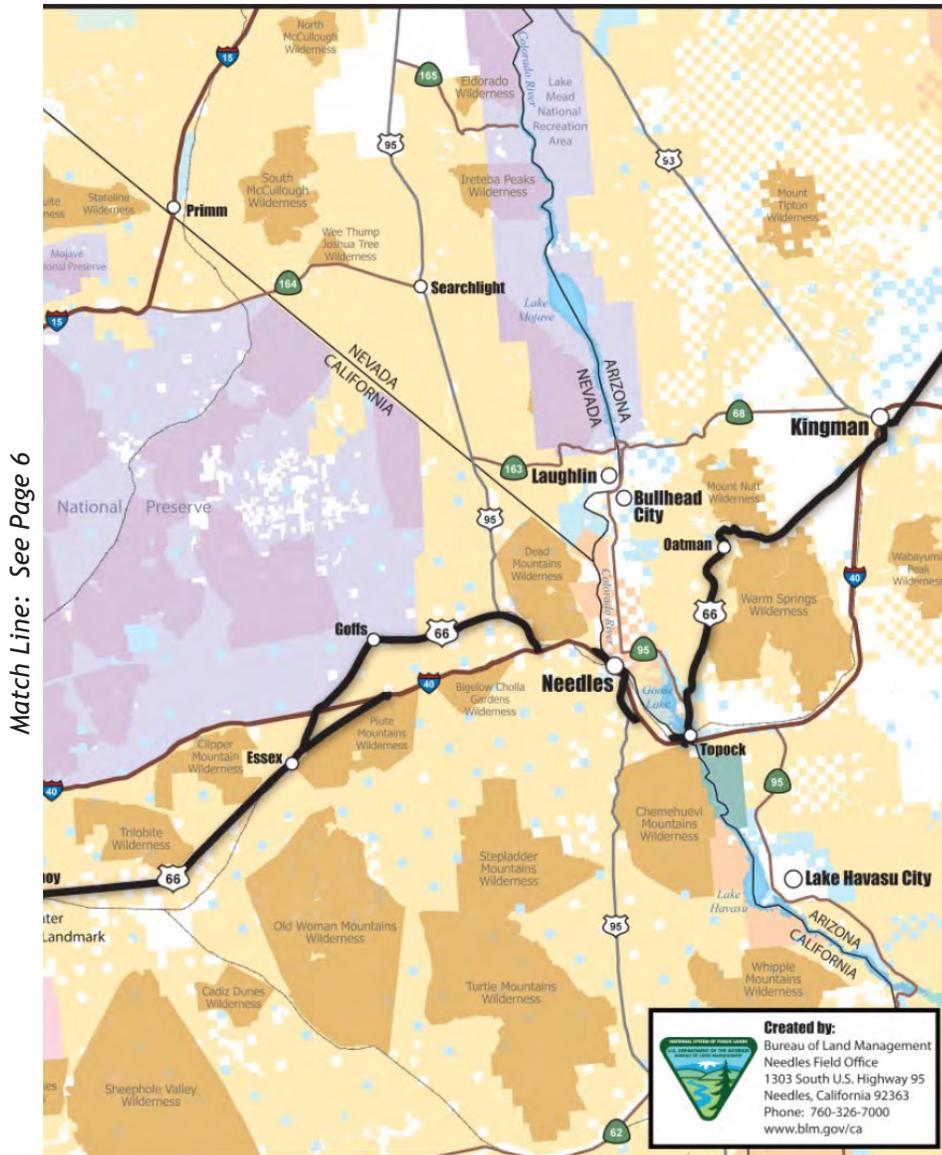
Legend  
 CA ROUTE 66 Main Tour Route Visually Prominent Land (within 30 miles)\*  
 20 mile buffer Value  
 More Prominent

The primary type of change that may occur within the viewshed is associated with utility scale renewable energy facilities. Chapter 4 documents research indicating that the maximum distance these facilities can be discerned by the casual observer is twenty miles, along with suggested guidelines for development to reduce visual impacts. Therefore, the maximum corridor width is limited to twenty miles.

Figure 9 Viewshed map showing the relative visibility of lands that can be seen from the route. Darker red tones indicate higher visibility from more points along the route. The red-dashed line shows the twenty mile maximum distance of the Historic Route 66 corridor.

Lands within the corridor are owned or managed by both private entities and public agencies as shown on Figure 10. The BLM is the primary federal land management agency along with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service (NPS). Private lands are regulated by San Bernardino County. No change in the regulatory authority of either public or private lands will result from designation as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road. This CMP focuses on new development and does not propose changes to ways in which operation and maintenance of existing utility facilities are regulated.





40 and three high-voltage transmission line corridors are the main changes to the landscape. Associated roadside features are included within the corridor. Features include existing and former service stations, lodging, restaurants, and communities. Many features have changed dramatically since commerce once centered on Route 66 shifted to the newly constructed interstate. The locations of these features are noted on Map 3 (three sections), Appendix II.

### RELATED PLACES TO VISIT NEARBY (SIDE TRIPS)

Side trips can help to educate and encourage travelers to learn more about the nature and culture of Route 66 through the Mojave Desert. These nearby places to visit, included in the CMP for reference only, will be further documented as part of the marketing strategy (Chapter 7). A general set of criteria for evaluating side trips for inclusion in marketing materials include:

- Must be accessible from a paved and authorized route of travel and be located within 20 miles of the route
- Must have nationally significant historical or natural qualities
- Must have existing visitor facilities including parking and interpretation
- Must be universally accessible for all visitors

Some former alignments of Route 66 are now dead ends or only navigable by four-wheel drive vehicles with a high clearance. They should be considered as a side trip only if there is something at the end of the route worth visiting (recreational site, interpretive site, natural feature, etc.) and they are safe for travel by all vehicle types on a BLM designated travel route. The *EZ Guide* provides the most complete information about former alignments. See Chapter 6 for discussion of travel safety, and Chapter 7 for discussion of the need to develop itineraries that include travel safety information.

Chapters 6 and 7 both stress the need—when considering or planning a side trip—to check with the appropriate land owner (BLM, Forest Service, National Park, Tribal Lands, State, County, Private, etc.) for locations of designated public areas and access routes and to avoid potential trespass or unauthorized activities. Visitors are encouraged to call or visit the local BLM field office for further information (See <http://www.blm.gov/ca/needles> or <http://www.blm.gov/ca/barstow> for locations).