



6 STOPS ON 66

THE NORTH GATEWAY STOP

NORTH GATEWAY STOP, JOLIET, IL

The North end of the IL 53 Corridor is anchored by the Historic Downtown of Joliet, a major stop on Historic Route 66 today. However, Interstate 80 is a significant barrier between Downtown Joliet to the north and the rest of the 25 mile long corridor. There is no signage on Interstate 80, the ramps or on IL 53 to indicate that this is a Major Access point to Route 66. For southbound IL 53, there is no indication that one is entering a major section of the Historic Mother Road.

The North Gateway Area offers great opportunities to address these issues and create a clear and attractive gateway to this section of Route 66. Plan recommendations have received great support at the stakeholders forums.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A. TRANSFORM THE TWO RAIL BRIDGES WITH CREATIVE SIGNAGE TO MARK THE ENTRANCE TO ROUTE 66

B. CREATE AN ICONIC PHOTO STOP WITH PARKING AND SIGNAGE DIRECTING TO NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

C. MAKE HISTORIC BRANDON DAM AND LOCK A DESTINATION CONNECTED TO ROUTE 66/IL 53

D. CREATE A PUBLIC PARK ON THE WOODED PARCEL FACING THE DAM

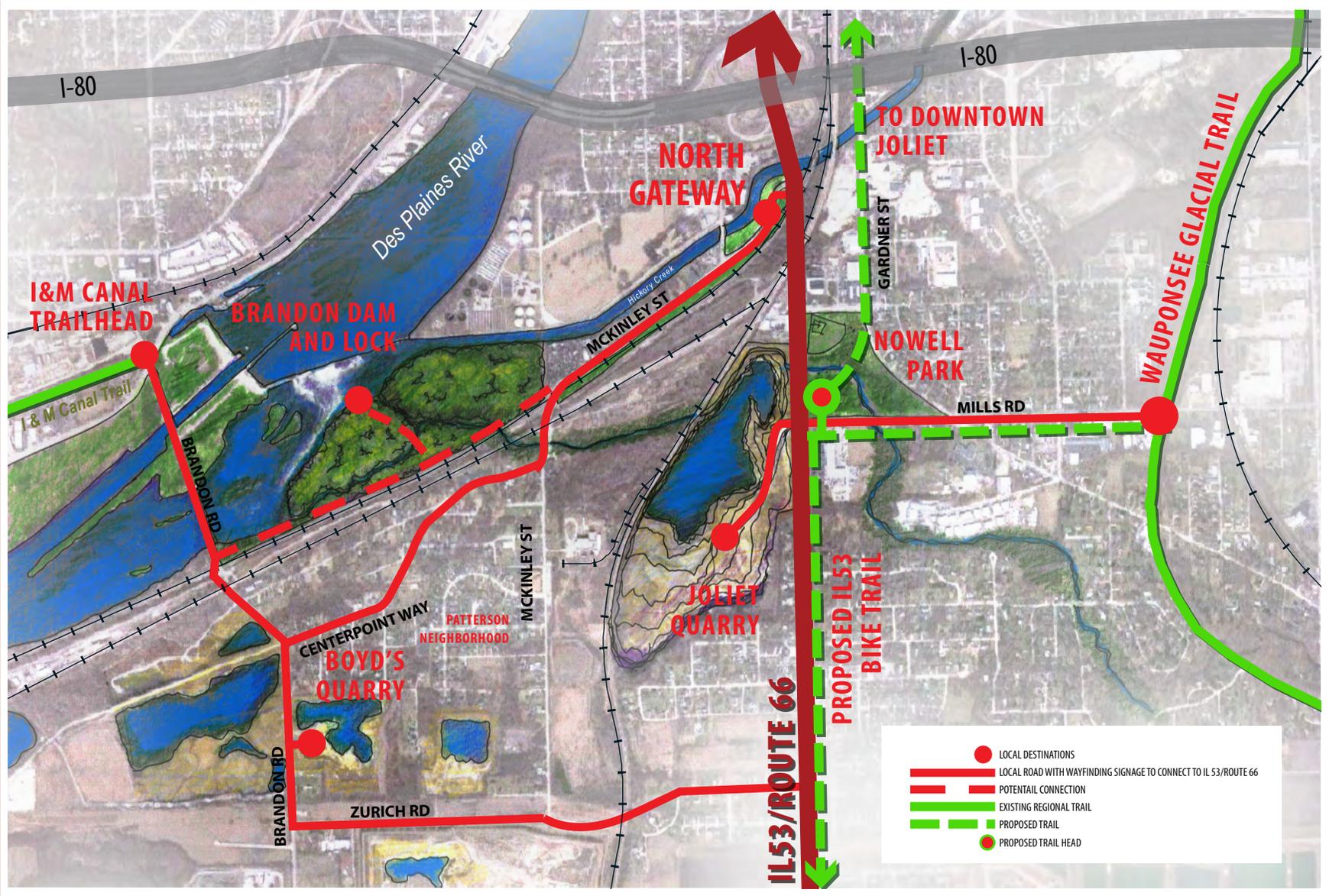
E. INVEST IN BOYD'S QUARRY TO CREATE A RECREATIONAL DESTINATION IN THE PATTERSON NEIGHBORHOOD

F. DEVELOP A NEW BIKE TRAIL IN THE IL 53 R.O.W. ALONG THE EAST SIDE FROM NOWELL PARK TO THE NEXT MIDEWIN STOP

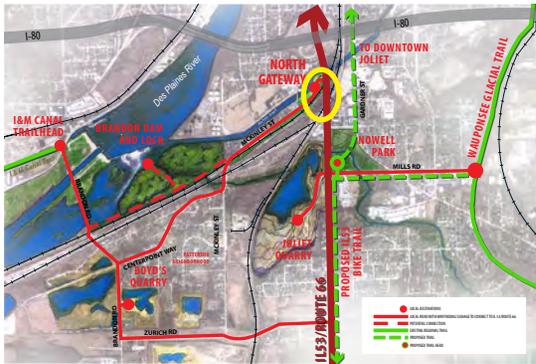
G. CREATE A TRAILHEAD FOR THE PROPOSED BIKE TRAIL ON IL 53 AT NOWELL PARK AND CONNECT TO THE WAUPONSEE TRAIL ALONG MILLS ROAD

H. ADD SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING AT I-80, RAMPS, IL 53 AND LOCAL ROADS AND STOPS

PLAN FOR THE NORTH GATEWAY STOP



AN ICONIC GATEWAY TO THE CORRIDOR



A. TRANSFORM THE TWO RAIL BRIDGES WITH CREATIVE SIGNAGE TO MARK THE ENTRANCE TO ROUTE 66

The existing two Rail Bridges need improvements. The road narrows to 60 feet under the rail bridges, making freight traffic difficult. No sidewalks create unsafe pedestrian and bike connections.

By adding unique signage and graphics on the bridge, these old structures can be transformed into attractive gateways and also a PHOTO STOP for 66 tourists.



*Right: Condition of the two Rail Bridges on IL 53 today
Below: Bridge Signage Concepts provided by Chicagoland Speedway*



Bridge enhancements will need to maintain proper visibility of the clearance height signage and meet with I.D.O.T approval.

A MAJOR PHOTO STOP AT THE RAIL BRIDGE



B. CREATE AN ICONIC PHOTO STOP WITH PARKING AND SIGNAGE DIRECTING TO NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

The underutilized small piece of land at the southwest corner of McKinley Street and IL 53/ Route 66 makes a perfect place for a safe Route Photo Stop with the following features:

- Parking for 10-12 cars, bikes, Zip Car station, bike share etc.
- Small plaza to place an iconic statue or artwork
- Signage and wayfinding maps to other corridor attractions

Left and below: Site Plan and concepts for North Gateway Stop

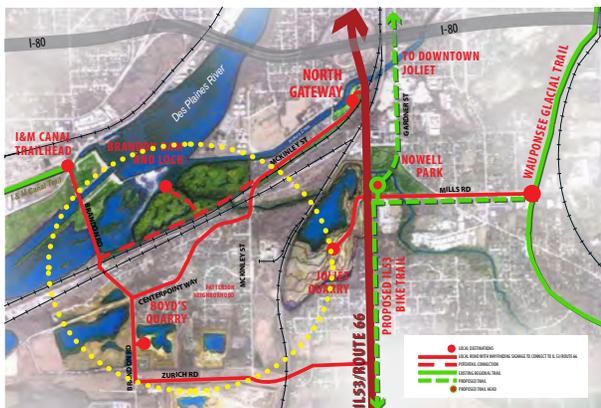
Right: Examples of Route 66 signs on bridges



MAKING THE HISTORIC BRANDON DAM AND LOCKS A DESTINATION



Brandon Road looking north to the Dam



C. BRANDON LOCK AND DAM HISTORIC DISTRICT

Only 2 miles west of IL 53 / Route 66, this 93 acre historic district in Joliet includes Illinois Waterway structures dating from 1933. Also known as Lock & Dam 3, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 and is managed by the U.S. Army Corps.

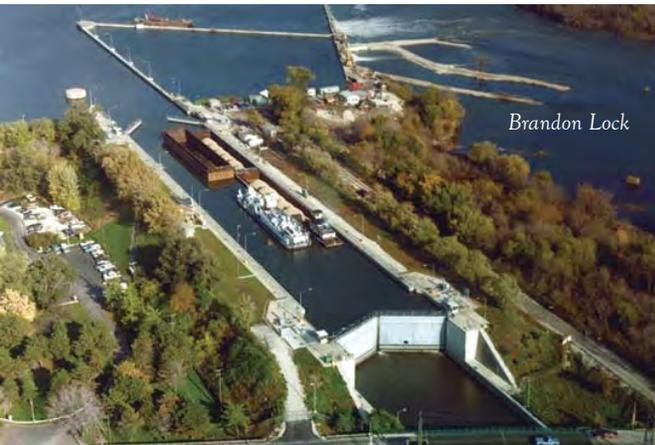
Today, there is no place for visitors to enjoy the beauty of the dam from a safe vantage point. Access to the lock is restricted due to security concerns. There is no signage relating the history of the district.

BRANDON BRIDGE

Brandon bridge offers great vistas of the river and the dam, but the narrow bridge today has no sidewalks, making it unsafe for visitors wanting to stop. The bridge appears to be a popular fishing spot also, with fishermen standing on the narrow edges in unsafe conditions.

D. CREATE A PUBLIC RIVERFRONT PARK ON THE PARCEL TO THE SOUTHEAST OF THE DAM.

This heavily wooded parcel owned by the U.S. Army Corps could offer trails to the water's edge and safe vantage points for visitors to enjoy the beauty of the dam, and provide safe fishing access.



Brandon Lock



Fishing on Brandon Street



Wooded Parcel across the Dam for a possible park

REINVESTING IN THE PATTERSON NEIGHBORHOOD

Just south of the Historic Bandon Dam and Locks lies the small Patterson Neighborhood that could greatly benefit from tourism to the area. Zarley Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in Will County, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, long the pre-eminent African-American church in Joliet, and Boyd's Quarry, with its pristine blue waters, are great assets that are highlighted in the plan.



Zarley Cemetery



Boyd's Quarry

PROVIDE ROADWAY AND TRAIL ACCESS TO THE NEW PARK

Extend McKinley Street along the north of the rail tracks to Brandon Road if possible. At a minimum, consider providing a trail connection from the North Gateway to the new park.

ADD WAYFINDING SIGNAGE TO DIRECT VISITORS TO THE DAM FROM ROUTE 66.

ADD INFORMATIVE SIGNAGE TO CONVEY THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAM AND LOCKS.

E. BOYD'S QUARRY

The Will County Environmental Network has been working on gaining Boyd's for recreational use. The quarry's exposed bedrock is beautiful, and the water is crystal clear. It is drinking-water quality, and is routinely tested. The vision for the quarry includes:

- Walking paths, picnic pavilions and fishing piers.
- A visual destination for artists and photographers
- A learning station about limestone and native plants

- Highlighting nearby assets: the river, Brandon Lock and Dam, the I & M Canal, expansion of the Will County Forest Preserve near Laraway and Patterson Roads.

The Quarry walls can also offer a unique opportunity to attract younger people to the area, with zip lining, rock climbing and cliff jumping possibilities.



I & M Trail head

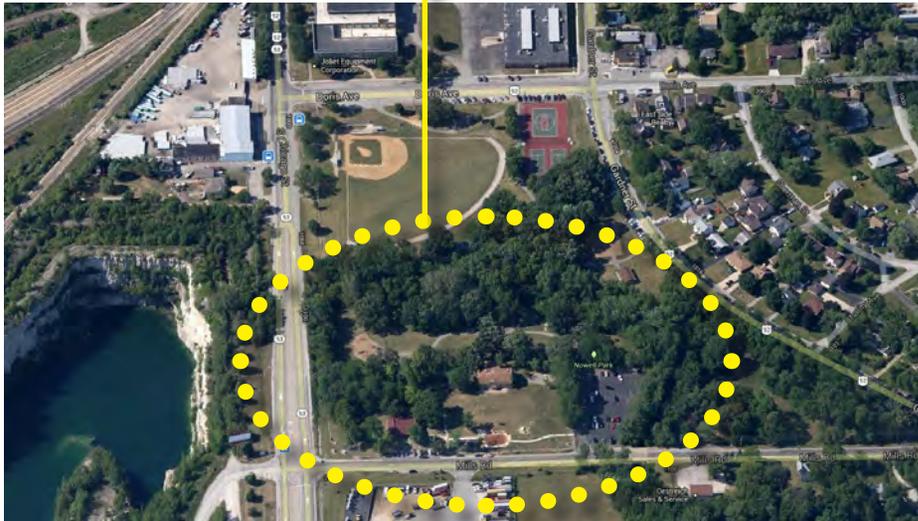
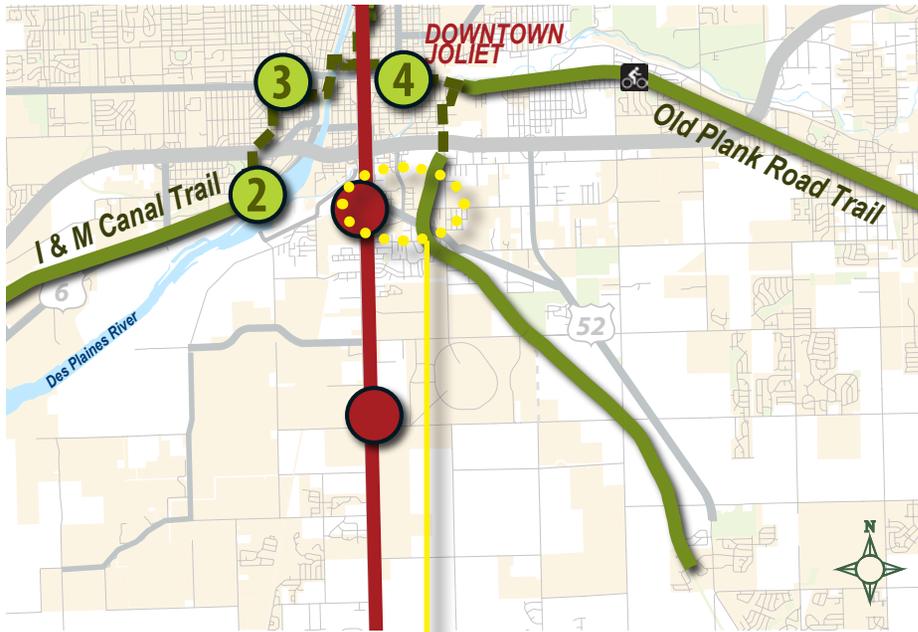


Boyd's Quarry



Quincy Quarry, MA

TRAILHEAD FOR A NEW BIKE TRAIL ALONG ROUTE 66 WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE FOR THE NORTH GATEWAY STOP



E. DEVELOP A NEW BIKE TRAIL IN THE IL 53 R.O.W.

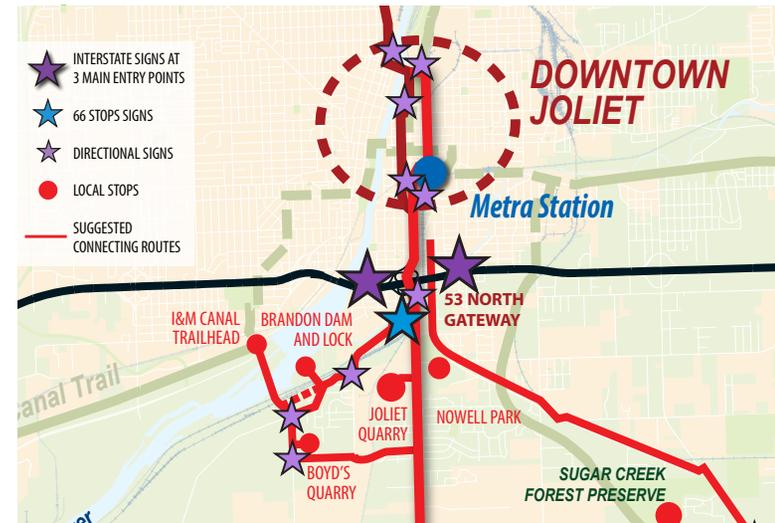
Trail along the east R.O.W. of IL-53 would begin at Nowell Park in Joliet and end in Braidwood. North of Nowell Park, the IL 53 R.O.W. narrows under the two rail bridges, and a safe trail connection is not possible. Gardner Street is recommended as an on street connection from Nowell Park to Joliet Union Station across I-80.

F. CREATE A TRAILHEAD FOR THE PROPOSED BIKE TRAIL ON IL 53 AT NOWELL PARK AND CONNECT TO THE WAUPONSEE TRAIL ALONG MILLS ROAD

Nowell Park would be the location of the trail head. Nowell Park already has many amenities such as benches, drinking fountains, shaded rest areas, a pavilion, rest rooms, and parking and would be a good location for additional signage and QR codes to provide information on other trails and area activities and attractions.

G. SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING AT THE NORTH GATEWAY STOP

Add signage and wayfinding at I-80, ramps, IL 53 and local roads and stops. A detail of the signage plan for the north gateway is below.





3
B

6 STOPS ON 66

THE SPORTS VENUES STOP



This corridor is the hub of major national and regional RACING VENUES.

NASCAR estimated over **150,000** people attended events at the Chicagoland Speedway in 2012. Speedway visitors are probably not even aware that they are right on the Mother Road with many other attractions nearby.



CELEBRATE THE RACING HUB OF THE REGION AT THE HEART OF THE MOTHER ROAD

Over 2000 acres of land surround the Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway facilities that offer great potential for large new recreational venues, only 2 miles south of I-80. Today, there are no significant amenities around these major venues that can cater to the thousands of spectators who come to the area every year.



The development sites around the Seedway and Raceway provide an opportunity to address these needs and to enhance both the racing and Route 66 experience. The large sites can accommodate many large footprint developments and attractions that can complement the racing venues.

POSSIBILITIES, AS HEARD AT THE STAKEHOLDER FORUMS AND VARIOUS MEETINGS INCLUDE:

- RESTAURANTS, FAST FOOD, AND LOCAL FOOD VENUES
- LODGING: HOTELS, MOTELS AND CAMPGROUNDS
- FAMILY ORIENTED RESORT
- YOUTH SPORTS COMPLEX
- SCOUTING , YOUTH CAMPS
- EQUESTRIAN CENTERS
- SHOOTING RANGE
- MINI GOLF
- GO CART RACING
- ROUTE 66 CHILDREN'S AMUSEMENT PARK

AND MUCH MORE.

1. CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY
2. ROUTE 66 RACEWAY
3. FPDWC AND SUGAR CREEK PRESERVE
4. WAUPONSEE TRAIL
5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

A MAJOR PHOTO STOP CELEBRATING CARS AND RACING



ROUTE 66 TOURISTS AND RACING SPECTATORS SHARE A COMMON PASSION FOR CARS AND DRIVING. A STOP FOR TOURISTS WHERE THEY CAN TAKE PHOTOS IN FRONT OF THE SPEEDWAY AND THE RACEWAY WOULD ADD INCREDIBLE VALUE TO THE 66 EXPERIENCE. THE STOP CAN OFFER THE FOLLOWING AMENITIES:

- AN ICONIC OBJECT / SCULPTURE / ARTWORK / SIGN / NATURAL FEATURE THAT CREATES A UNIQUE PHOTO OPPORTUNITY, AND IS LARGE ENOUGH TO HAVE GREAT VISUAL APPEAL FOR TRAVELERS ON THE ROAD.

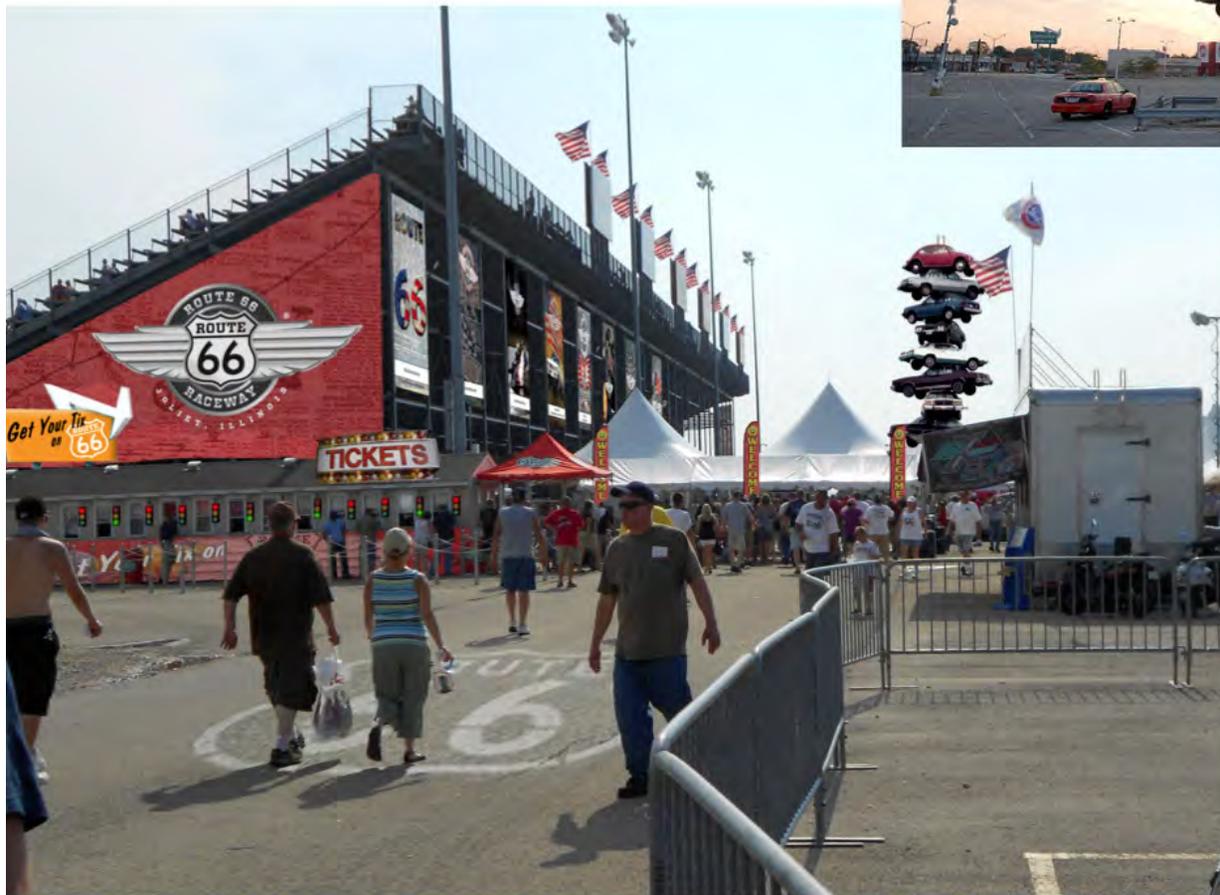


- MAPS, WAYFINDING, SIGNAGE AND APPS DIRECTING TO OTHER STOPS IN THE AREA
- SUPPORT AMENITIES: PARKING, RESTROOMS, ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATIONS, BIKE SHARE, ZIP CARS
- A GEOCACHING STOP
- ROUTE 66 THEMED RETAIL, GAS AND FOOD

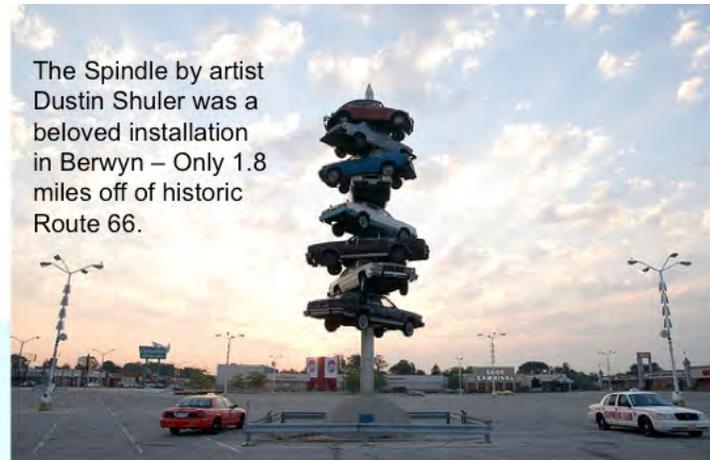
ROUTE 66 STOP IDEAS: COURTESY OF THE CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY

Route 66 Entrance

Concepts courtesy of the Chicagoland Speedway showing ideas to attract Route 66 tourists and other visitors to the area on race days and non event days, and to make this an even stronger tourist stop on the Mother Road.



The Spindle by artist Dustin Shuler was a beloved installation in Berwyn – Only 1.8 miles off of historic Route 66.



When dismantled in the middle of the night in May 2008 to make way for a Walgreens, the top two cars were saved and placed in storage in case a new spindle was ever created.

We could recreate a “Car-Kabob” at the entrance to bring back a piece of Chicagoland lore and make another must-see destination on the north side of the Raceway

[The Spindle, Berwyn, IL 1989-2008](#)

Classic Car Theme Night



Either on it's own or perfectly coordinating with the Hollywood Casino Joliet Route 66 Classic event, the Drive-In Movie is classic Car Americana.

Inflatable screens or suspended from grandstands.

Show Classic, family movies

Broadcast the audio over car radio

Car side food delivery via roller skates? Even if just a perk for the Classic Car Corral.



IDEAS FOR EVENTS AND THEMED AREAS: COURTESY OF THE CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY



Additional Themed Areas



ROUTE 66 THEMED TRAVEL CENTER, TRUCK STOP & FOOD VENUES



OVER 300 ACRES OF LAND IS AVAILABLE ALONG IL 53 NEAR THE CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY AND ROUTE 66 RACEWAY. THESE SITES ARE PRIME OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROUTE 66 THEMED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF LARAWAY AND SWETZER ROADS.

*Below: Iconic Family Friendly Truck Stops, Gas Stations and Motels were part of the Route 66 Experience
Below right: Chicago's Rock n Roll McDonald's, an iconic tourist stop*

CELEBRATE THE CAR AND TRAVEL

The significant amount of land around the Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway offers the opportunity to attract business that can celebrate all things related to automobile travel, and are reminiscent of the kind of places that would have been found along Route 66 during its heyday.

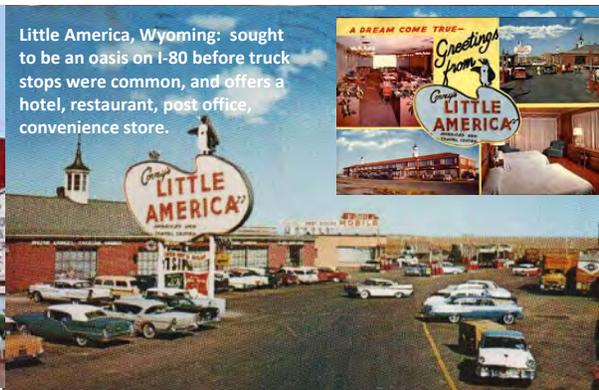
A travel center or motel, truck stop and various food venues and souvenir shops that are designed in a Route 66 style can provide needed amenities to Route 66 travelers, racing fans and all visitors to the area.

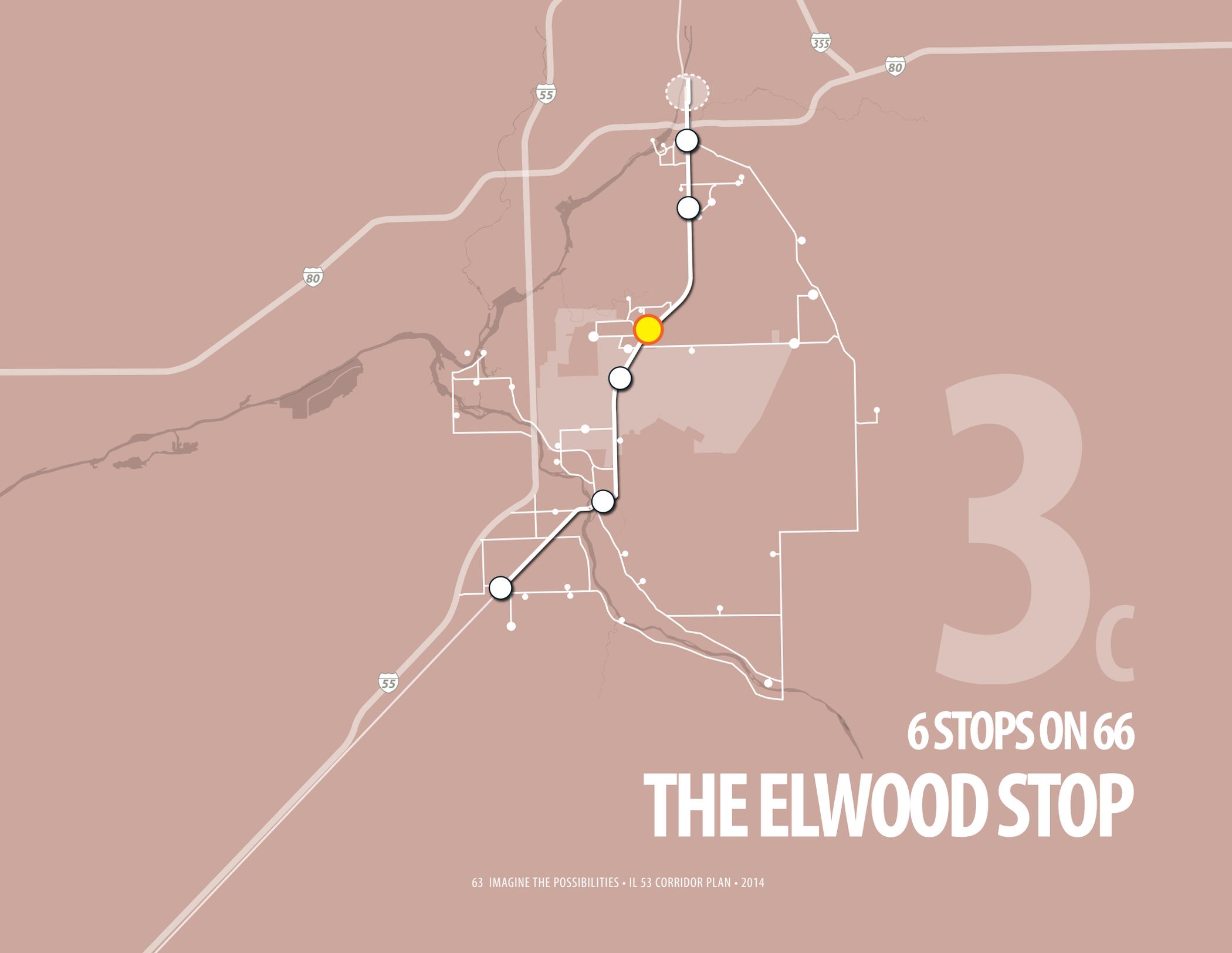
The first McDonald's was located on Route 66 in California. This would be an ideal location for a new McDonald's designed to emulate the Route 66 theme of iconic, oversized and fun.

A new truck stop at the southwest corner of IL 53 and Laraway Road began construction while the Plan was being developed. Inspired by the plan recommendations, the project is including an iconic Route 66 themed photo opportunity for travellers. The proposal includes fast food, gas, parking, indoor seating and bike trail along IL 53.



The new Truck Stop, located at Laraway and IL-53 will be designed in a Route 66 theme. The truck stop will include an iconic Photo Op of a reproduction of the famous Blues Brother car, mounted 25ft in the air.





6 STOPS ON 66

THE ELWOOD STOP

ROUTE 66 ELWOOD STOP: CELEBRATE THE ORIGINAL ROUTE & ORIGINAL WAY OF LIFE

CELEBRATE THE ORIGINAL ROUTE & ORIGINAL WAY OF LIFE: WORKING, FARMING, SERVING, EVERYDAY AMERICANS LIVING ON AND TRAVELING THE MOTHER ROAD.

ALL TEXT AND IMAGES COURTESY OF THE VILLAGE OF ELWOOD



ORIGINAL ROUTE



ALNC



HISTORIC FARM IMPLEMENTS, COMPONENTS, AND TOOLS COLLECTED AND PRESERVED BY ELWOOD FARMER & BUSINESS



ARSENAL WORKER



CREATE ICONIC STOP AT DOUGLAS STREET, ON THE ORIGINAL ROUTE 66

- CREATE SHELTER/STRUCTURE WITH HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT ELWOOD'S CURRENT AND HISTORIC IDENTITY AS A FARMING AND MILITARY COMMUNITY, ALONG WITH MAPS AND DIRECTIONS TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN NATIONAL CEMETERY AND MIDEWIN'S BROWN CIRCLE PROPERTY.
- ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN AMERICA WHERE
- VISITORS WILL BE ABLE TO DRIVE OVER THE ORIGINAL ROUTE 66 MATERIALS.
- PHOTO OP
- PARKING
- GATEWAY TO HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ELWOOD, ICONIC EXAMPLE OF CHARMING LOCAL ROUTE 66 COMMUNITY.



470TH BATTALION



RAIL CAR STRUCTURE



ROADSIDE PICNIC AREA

Left: Iconic Shelter Ideas

THIS PLAN SUPPORTS THE CITY OF ELWOOD'S PLANS AND EFFORTS TO MAKE ELWOOD A STRONGER DESTINATION AND STOP ON HISTORIC ROUTE 66.

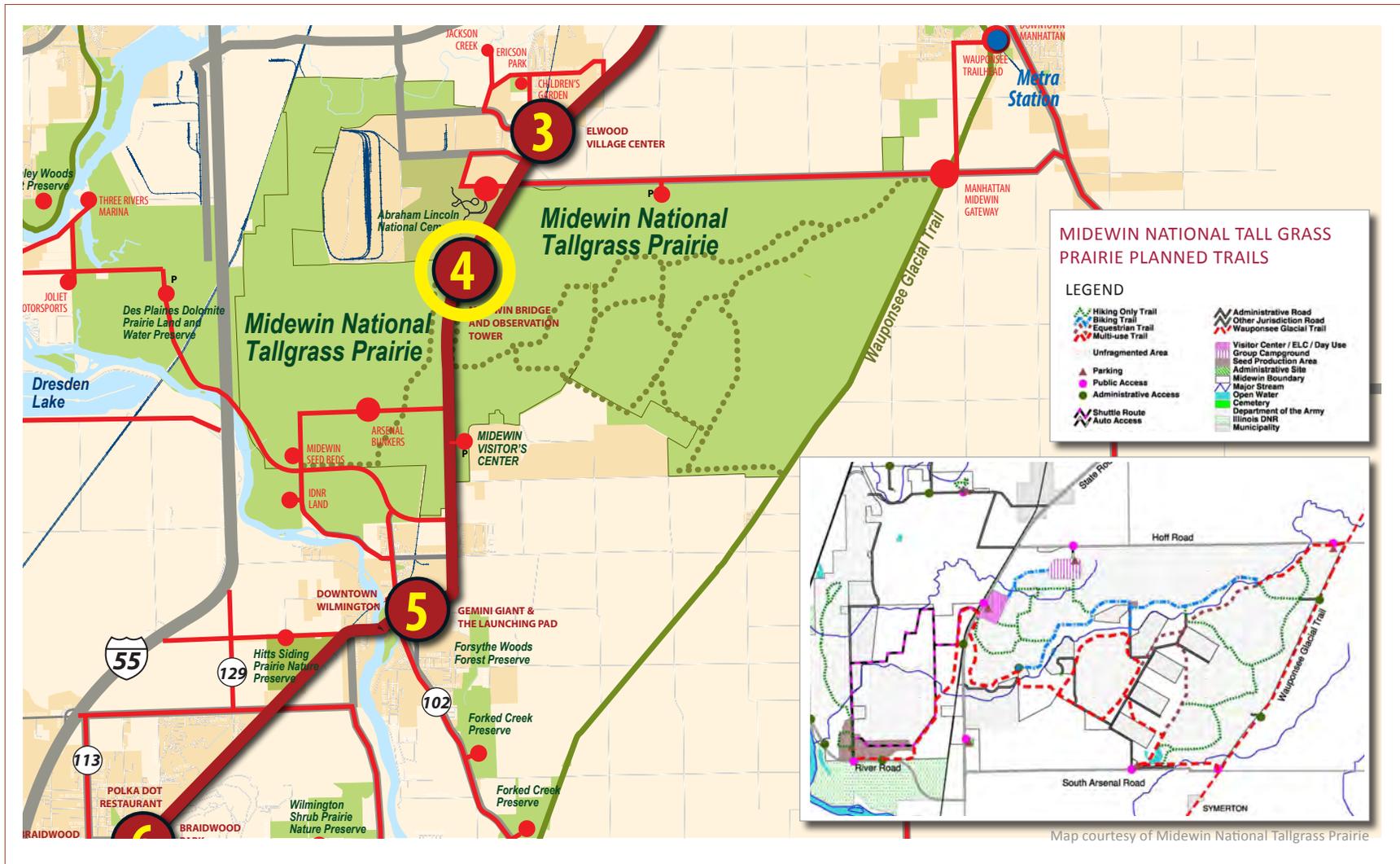


6 STOPS ON 66

MIDEWIN STOP

THREE NATIONAL DESTINATIONS AT ONE STOP

The Midwin Stop on Route 66 is this unique opportunity to provide visitors vistas and access to three national destinations: The Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Historic Route 66 and Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie. The proposed location for the stop is near the Iron Bridge Trailhead and the existing Trail Bridge over IL 53. With bold new ideas, this stop can define the heart of a unique national destination.



CONCEPT FOR THE MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE STOP

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. DEVELOP AN ICONIC OBSERVATION TOWER AND A NEW MIDEWIN TRAIL BRIDGE AS A MAJOR TOURIST STOP

B. CONNECT TO EXISTING AND PLANNED MIDEWIN ATTRACTIONS, INCLUDING:

- IRON BRIDGE TRAILHEAD AND PARKING
- PROPOSED BISON HERD PASTURE
- PRAIRIE LEARNING CENTER
- MIDEWIN TRAILS
- PROPOSED VISITOR TRAM

C. CONSIDER A POSSIBLE SOUTH ENTRANCE TO THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN NATIONAL CEMETERY

D. PROVIDE SUPPORT FACILITIES & SERVICES NEAR THE OBSERVATION TOWER AND BRIDGE, INCLUDING:

- PARKING AND RESTROOMS
- MIDEWIN VISITOR TRAM STOP
- BIKE SHARE STATION
- ZIP CAR STATION
- GEOCACHING STOP
- SIGNAGE, WAYFINDING, AND APP

E. DEVELOP BIKE TRAILS WITHIN IL 53 R.O.W ON BOTH SIDES FROM HOFF ROAD TO ARSENAL ROAD

F. ADD NATIVE PRAIRIE LANDSCAPING TO THE MEDIAN OF IL 53 FROM FROM HOFF ROAD TO ARSENAL ROAD



AT **19,000** ACRES, THE **LARGEST**
CONTIGUOUS OPEN SPACE IN NE ILLINOIS

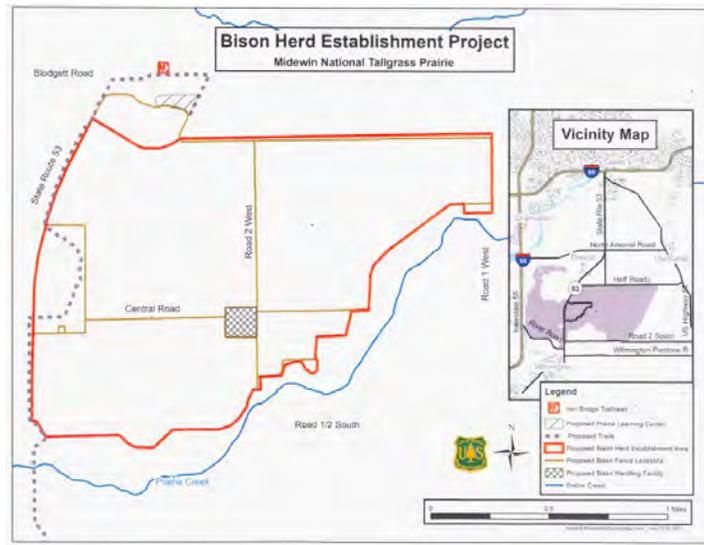
THE FIRST **NATIONAL** TALLGRASS PRAIRIE LIES AT THE HEART OF ROUTE 66



MIDEWIN



A HERD OF BISON AS A MAJOR REGIONAL DRAW



Images and information courtesy of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

The Forest Service at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in partnership with the National Forest Foundation is proposing to develop a **1,200 ACRE bison grazing area**.

Bison were removed from the tallgrass prairie ecosystem over a century ago. Scientific literature frequently refers to bison as a keystone species in the tallgrass prairie ecosystem.

The proposed location for the bison herd will be very close to the proposed **Miewin Stop on Route 66**. In addition, the location will offer the following advantages:

- Fairly close to existing and planned trails to and from the Iron Bridge Trailhead
- Within view of the location for the future Prairie Learning Center.

- The bison herd in the future may be seen from Illinois 53 and the Midewin Iron Bridge Trailhead

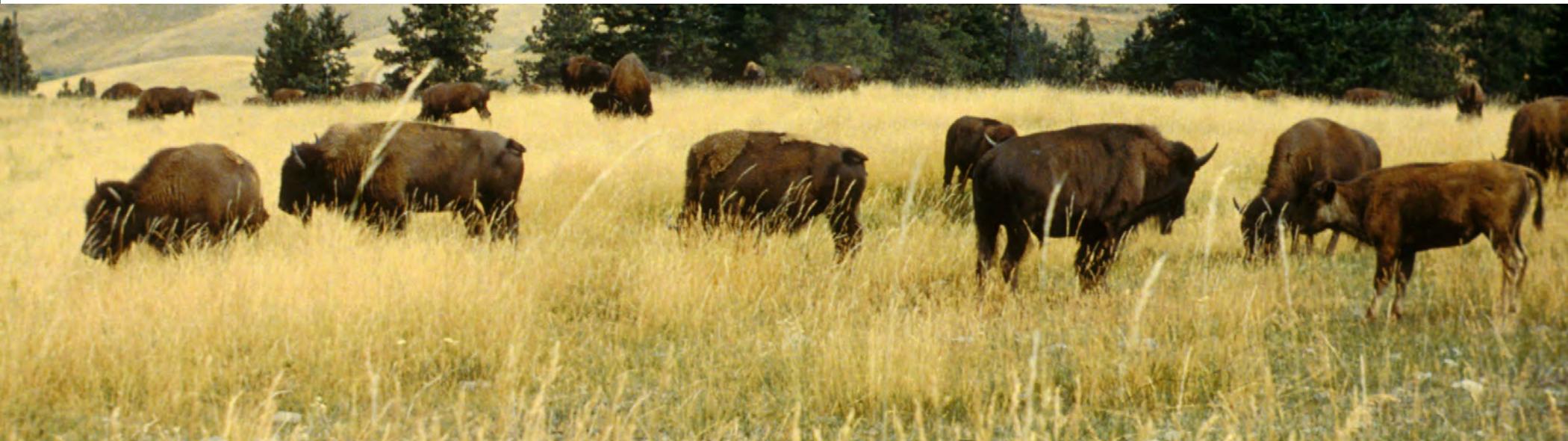
Establishing a herd of bison on Midewin will also bring more visitors to the site to view these iconic symbols of our heritage.

A system of multi-use trails will surround the bison pasture.

Several elevated overlooks will be constructed along these trails.

Long term plans includes a **visitor tram** system that travels within bison pastures.

Hiking trails will be located in parts of the bison pasture and only opened for use when bison are not in those pastures.



A MAJOR PHOTO STOP AT THE OLD BRIDGE



PROPOSED PRAIRIE LEARNING CENTER: IMAGES COURTESY OF MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

A MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE PLAN IS TO DEVELOP AN ICONIC OBSERVATION TOWER AND A NEW MIDEWIN TRAIL BRIDGE AT THE HEART OF ROUTE 66.

At 19,000 acres, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is immense. An observation Tower at the heart of Midewin would allow visitors incredible views to truly enjoy and appreciate the vastness and unique beauty of the Tallgrass Prairie.

The observation tower will also allow visitors to see the whole stretch of the corridor and its many assets:

- Historic Joliet to the north
- The Confluence of Three Rivers to the west
- Bison Pasture and Manhattan to the east, and
- Kankakee River to the south.

Whether designed in a Prairie Style or a contemporary style, as shown in the sketches and examples on these pages, the design and style of the tower and bridge have to be **ICONIC**- a must stop for travelers on the road.

THIS STOP OFFERS A GREAT WAY TO CONNECT ROUTE 66 TO THE MANY EXISTING AND PLANNED MIDEWIN ATTRACTIONS, INCLUDING:

- IRON BRIDGE TRAILHEAD AND PARKING
- PROPOSED BISON HERD PASTURE
- PRAIRIE LEARNING CENTER
- MIDEWIN TRAILS
- PROPOSED VISITOR TRAM

PROVIDE SUPPORT FACILITIES & SERVICES NEAR THE OBSERVATION TOWER AND BRIDGE, INCLUDING:

- PARKING AND RESTROOMS
- MIDEWIN VISITOR TRAM STOP
- BIKE SHARE AND ZIP CAR STATIONS

Facilities such as bike share and Zip Car stations should be located in adjacent communities to encourage use of local recreation opportunities and businesses.

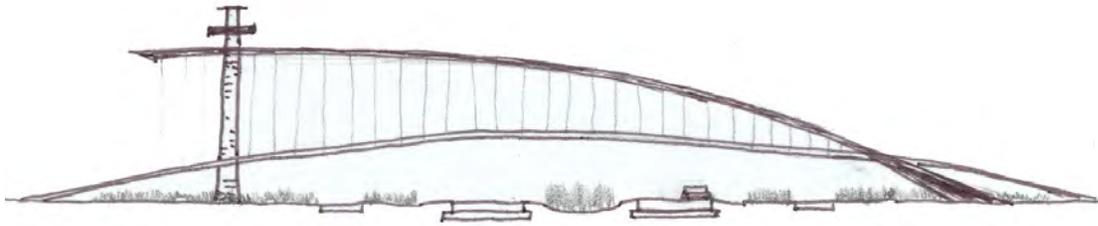
- GEOCACHING STOP
- SIGNAGE, WAYFINDING, AND APP

Below: Observation Tower at the Lewis and Clark State Historic Site, 180 foot tall (55 m), with observation platforms at 50, 100, and 150 ft. Completed in 2010 at a cost of \$5 million from local and state sources. Offers views to the River, Downtown St. Louis and the Gateway Arch, up to 13 miles.

EXISTING TRAIL BRIDGE OVER IL 53



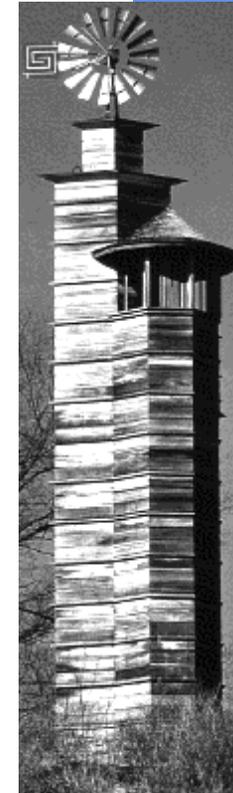
AN ICONIC OBSERVATION TOWER AND BRIDGE



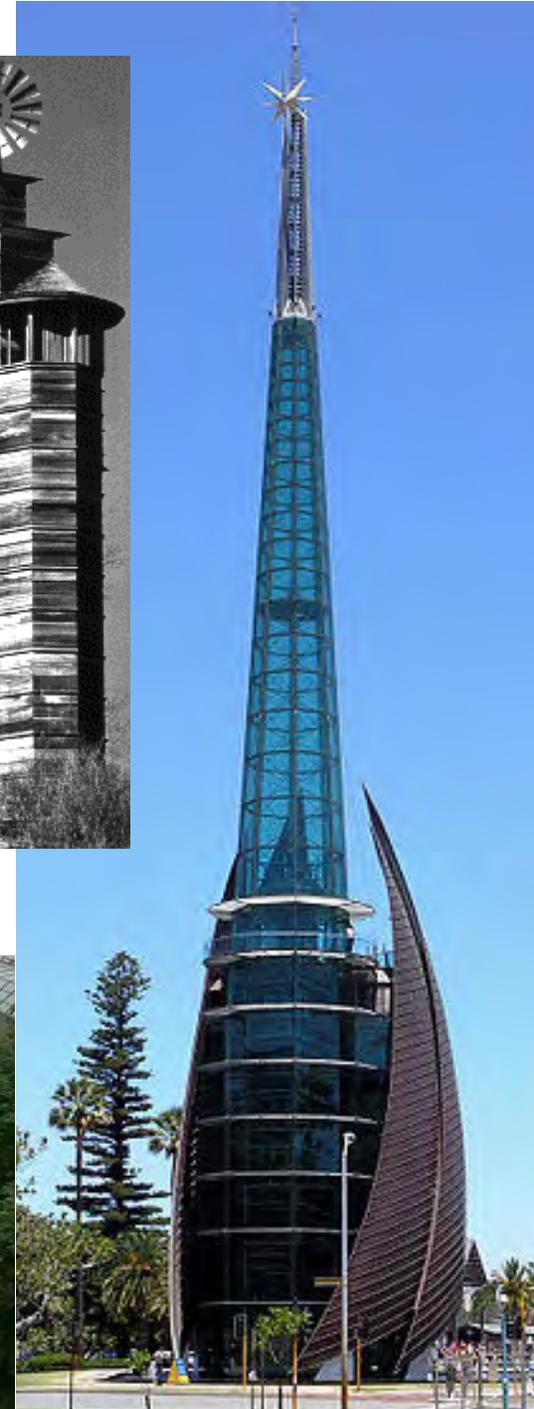
CONCEPT SKETCH OF ICONIC OBSERVATION TOWER AND TRAIL BRIDGE



EXISTING IL 53 R.O.W.



EXAMPLES OF ICONIC OBSERVATION TOWERS AND TRAIL/PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES



MANHATTAN: ONLY 4 MILES FROM ROUTE 66

The Village of Manhattan is just four miles from Historic Route 66, and offers some unique assets for the 6 Stops on 66 experience. This is an opportunity to establish Manhattan as one of the gateways to the Corridor. Visitors can arrive by train to the Manhattan Metra Station, hop on the Wauponsee Glacial Trail, and ride their bikes to many of the nearby destinations. Manhattan is also the eastern gateway to the Midewin national Tallgrass Prairie, where adjacent farmlands offer great opportunities of agritourism. The Round Barn can be a great family friendly destination for travellers on Route 66.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ROUND BARN

Highlight the Round Barn in Route 66 map and connect to 66 stops with wayfinding signage

Coordinate events at Round Barn with events at Speedway and Raceway weekends, and other Route 66 events.

Consider allowing overnight tent camping at Round Barn for Racing Fans.



B. THE EASTERN GATEWAY TO MIDEWIN

Strengthen Manhattan's identity as the Eastern Gateway to Midewin.

C. METRA STATION AND THE WAUPONSEE TRAIL

Add Car and Bike Share stations for travelers coming to the area by train

Provide signage to the local destinations, Wauponsee, Midewin, Manhattan Downtown and Round Barn, as well as all the Route 66 destinations.

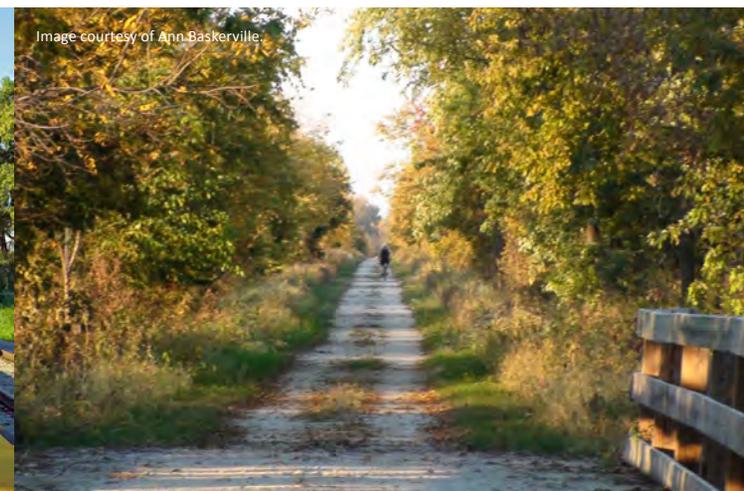
D. WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Add signage along the 66 Corridor to direct tourists to the Wauponsee Trail, the Manhattan Metra station, Downtown Manhattan and the Round Barn

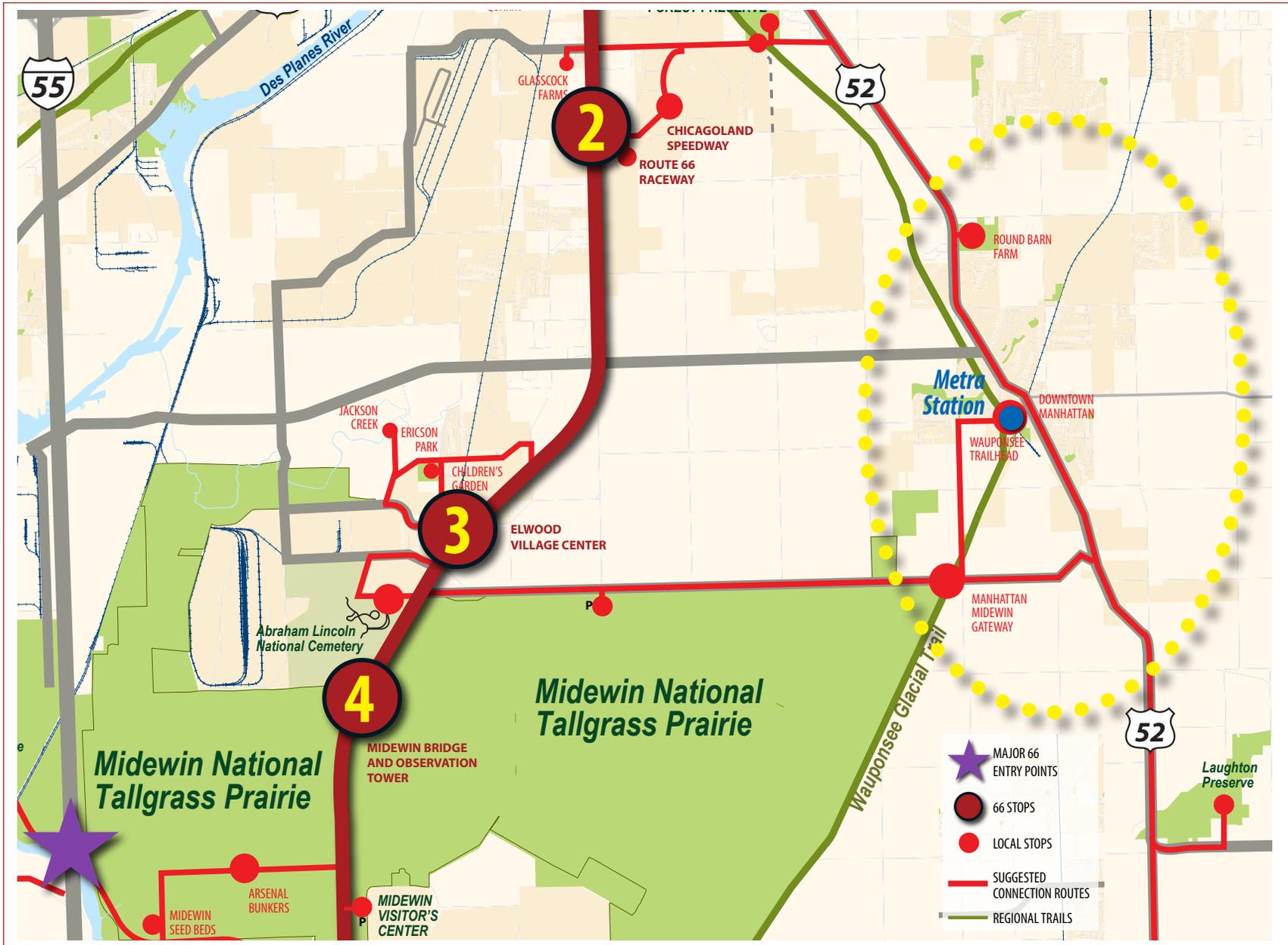
E. AGRITOURISM

Encourage Farms near the eastern edge of Midewin to develop tourism based activities and amenities at their farms.

Encourage stables and riding related amenities to offer riding as an attraction to tourists.



THE EASTERN GATEWAY TO MIDWIN





6 STOPS ON 66

THE WILMINGTON STOP

WILMINGTON STOP: ISLAND CITY ON ROUTE 66

Two of the most authentic and iconic pieces of Route 66, Gemini Giant and The Launching Pad, are located in the Island City of Wilmington. Thousands of 66 travelers stop to take a photo in front of the famed thirty foot giant every year. Yet there are other assets of this authentic Midwestern town that can be leveraged more strongly to capture tourists for a longer stop, including downtown anchored by Water Street and the picturesque Island and the Kankakee River. Plan recommendations include the following:

A. ENCOURAGE DOWNTOWN STORES TO HIGHLIGHT AND OFFER MORE ROUTE 66 THEMED MERCHANDISE



A. PRESERVE GEMINI GIANT AND THE LAUNCHING PAD AS AUTHENTIC ROUTE 66 ICONS

C. MAKE WATER STREET AN ICONIC 66 STOP

D. IMPLEMENT THE VISION PLANS FOR THE ISLAND

E. DEVELOP THE MILLRACE KAYAK COURSE

F. IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDED BIKE AND WATER TRAIL PLAN

G. IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDED SIGNAGE PLAN

A. PRESERVE GEMINI GIANT AND THE LAUNCHING PAD AS AUTHENTIC ROUTE 66 ICONS

- The Launching Pad, an iconic drive-in restaurant on 66 with Gemini Giant standing on the parking lot, has been closed and for sale since 2010. Along with the option of reopening the restaurant under new ownership, other possible complementary uses to keep this icon alive can include:
- A ROUTE 66 MERCHANDISE STORE
- A 66 BIKER SHOP
- 66 THEMED BAIT AND TACKLE STORE
- 66 THEMED CANOE AND BOAT RENTAL



CREATE AN ICONIC STOP ON WATER STREET

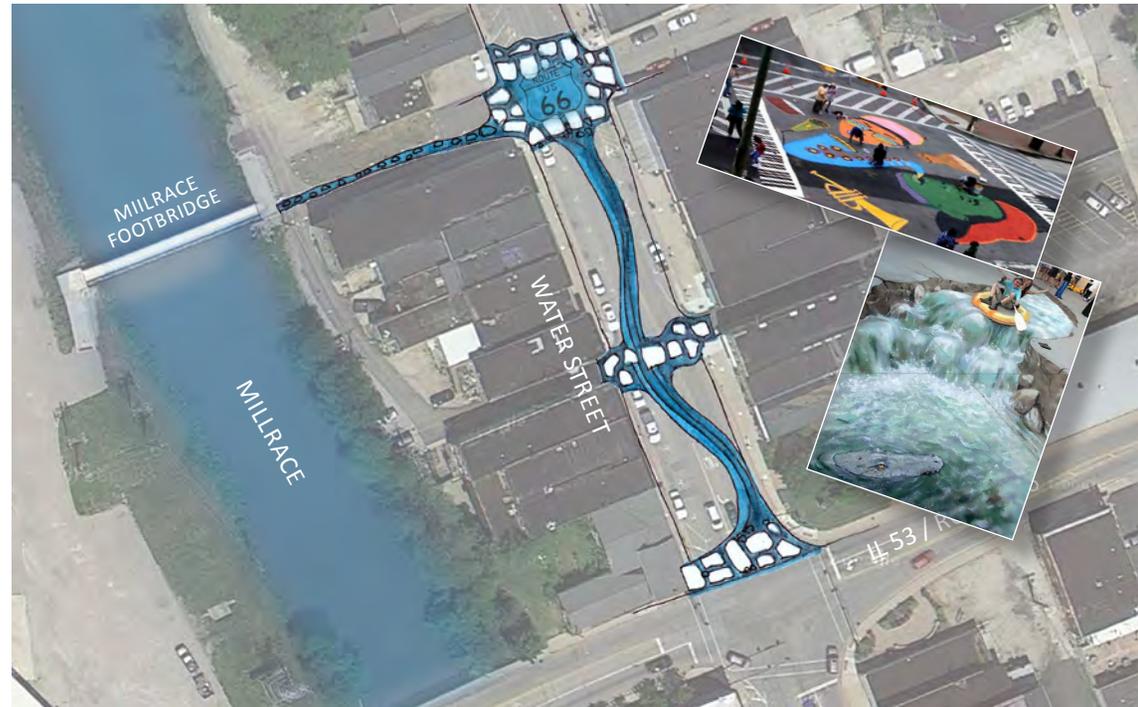
B. MAKE WATER STREET A MAJOR 66 STOP

Water Street is the classic small town authentic Main Street that 66 tourists are looking for, with one-of-a-kind antique stores, pubs and restaurants. A bold and iconic 66 phot op on Water Street can entice more tourists on IL 53/Route 66 to pause and stop, park on the street, take photos, and spend more time and money in the unique stores.

Opportunities for attracting more 66 Tourists to Water Street can include the following:

- AN ICONIC ROUTE 66 PAVEMENT SIGN ON WATER STREET THAT CELEBRATES THE RIVER
- A NEW ICONIC LARGE STATUE OR ART AT THE PARK AT NE CORNER OF IL 53 AND WATER STREET

Below: Pavement and sidewalk murals and artwork that create unique photo ops



THE ISLAND AS A UNIQUE 66 STOP

A VISION FOR WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS
WILL COUNTY'S ISLAND CITY

Wilmington, the Island City, will be known as a great Chicago-land destination offering a unique riverfront experience to visitors and the community. Highlights of the vision plan include:

- A CHARMING DOWNTOWN AND RIVERFRONT MAIN STREET
- A MAJOR DESTINATION ON HISTORIC ROUTE 66
- A UNIQUE GREEN ISLAND AT THE KANKAKEE RIVER
- UNIQUE RIVERFRONT RECREATION: KAYAKING, CANOEING, BOATING AND FISHING
- MAJOR DESTINATION IN THE REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM
- CONNECTIONS TO THE MIDEWIN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- RIVERFRONT LODGING, HOMES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AND
- A HISTORIC DAM

1. Relocation of historic train depot to the Island as a Route 66 stop and Welcome Center

2. Major Redevelopment Opportunity at end of Water St.

3. Kayaking Destination for Chicago-land

4. New Pedestrian Bridge and parking

5. Carillon or vertical sculptural element at end of North Island

6. Outdoor Music Venue

7. Redevelopment of properties along the river and Route 66

8. Redevelopment of corner site into hotel and marina

9. Alignment of access to north and south islands

10. Riverwalk loop with potential pedestrian bridge

11. Community and Recreation Center

12. An improved boat launch and canoe portage, with pond as a focal point

13. Improved car access and consolidated parking

14. Shoreline Restoration for safer pedestrian access and fishing

15. Overlook at Dam

16. Reconstruction of dam

17. Creation of small beach area

18. Cemetery as key element of the riverfront

Connect With Baltimore St Trail At Launching Pad

Connect With River Trail At Launching Pad

C. IMPLEMENT THE VISION PLANS FOR THE ISLAND

The City of Wilmington has prepared vision plans for the Island that will make this unique asset a stronger destination for the community and tourists. The City has submitted for an OSLAD Grant, from the State of Illinois, for land acquisition and site development for the South Island entry way. Openlands has purchased five homes and is holding the property for the City. This corridor plan strongly supports these plans for the island, and recommends adding ICONIC, 66 THEMED ideas to the elements of the plans.

D. DEVELOP THE MILLRACE KAYAK COURSE

The Vision Plan identified Millrace as a potential Kayak Course that can create a regional recreational destination right at the heart of Downtown Wilmington and the Island. A new footbridge has already been constructed over Millrace. A new route 66 themed kayak course would add a major new activity for 66 tourists.



IMPLEMENT THE SOUTH ISLAND PARK PLAN



ISLAND PARK - VISION PLAN

1. **EXISTING TRAIL ROUTE CONNECTION**
IMPORTANT REGIONAL TRAIL CONNECTION TO NORTH ISLAND PARK AND DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON



2. **EXISTING CROSSING**
EXISTING CROSSING AND ROADWAY SIGNAGE WOULD ALLOW USERS TO CROSS HISTORIC ROUTE 66 INTO SOUTH ISLAND PARK



3. **PROPOSED TRAIL WITH FITNESS STATIONS**
FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTION THROUGH SOUTH ISLAND PARK TO DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON



4. **PROPOSED PARKING LOT**
PARKING TO BE PROVIDED FOR SHELTER, PICNIC AREA AND TRAIL HEAD



5. **PROPOSED SHELTER & PICNIC AREA**
SHELTER AND PICNIC AREA VIEWABLE FROM HISTORIC ROUTE 66



6. **PROPOSED NATIVE PLANT RESTORATION**
WOODLAND NATIVE PLANTS AND FORBS AS A BACKDROP TO THE SHELTER AND PICNIC AREA



7. **PROPOSED ENTRANCE SIGN**
DOUBLE SIDED ENTRANCE SIGN TO SOUTH ISLAND PARK AND A COMMUNITY INFORMATION DIGITAL BOARD



8. **PROPOSED KIOSK**
KIOSK TO PROVIDE MAPS, WAYFINDING AND INFORMATION REGARDING SOUTH ISLAND PARK



9. **PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE SIGNS**
INTERPRETIVE SIGNS WILL EDUCATE USERS ON THE HISTORY OF SOUTH ISLAND AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVED OPEN SPACE

10. **PROPOSED BIKE RACKS**
BIKE RACKS TO BE PLACED AT TRAIL HEAD FOR ALL USERS



11. **PROPOSED ADA PLAYGROUND**
NEED EXISTS FOR AN ADA PLAYGROUND LOCATED NEAR THE COMMUNITY CENTER



12. **PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTER**
COMMUNITY CENTER AT TOP OF THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE KANKAKEE RIVER



13. **PROPOSED OVERLOOK**
POTENTIAL OVERLOOK ALONG THE EDGE OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER OFFERING DISTANT VIEWS TO THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST OF THE DAM AND RIVER



14. **EXISTING SHELTER**
EXISTING SHELTER TO REMAIN IN PLACE



15. **PROPOSED RESTROOMS**
NEED EXISTS FOR PUBLIC RESTROOMS ON SOUTH ISLAND



16. **PROPOSED PARKING LOTS**
PARKING LOTS FOR BASEBALL FIELDS AND ISLAND AMENITIES



17. **PROPOSED BOAT LAUNCH**
BOAT LAUNCH TO BE IMPROVED TO PROVIDE IMPROVED ACCESS AND PARKING - FEASIBILITY DEPENDS ON FUTURE CONDITION OF THE WATER COURSE THROUGH THIS AREA



18. **EXISTING BASEBALL FIELDS**
BALL FIELDS TO REMAIN WITH SOME IMPROVEMENTS AS NEEDED



19. **PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE/PEDESTRIAN FOOT BRIDGE**
POTENTIAL FOR PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE EASTERN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS



20. **PROPOSED OVERLOOK AT DAM**
PROPOSED OVERLOOK ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING DAM TO PROVIDE EXPANSIVE RIVER VIEWS TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH



21. **PROPOSED PRAIRIE NATIVE RESTORATION**
AREAS WHERE NATIVE VEGETATION COULD BE INTRODUCED FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT



22. **PROPOSED WETLAND RESTORATION**
NATIVE WETLAND VEGETATION TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE EXISTING LOW AREAS OF THE ISLAND



23. **PROPOSED WOODLAND RESTORATION**
AREAS WHERE NATIVE WOODLAND PLANTS (I.E. WOOD ANEMONES AND BLUEBELLS) COULD EXIST WITH TRAILS SURROUNDING THE RESTORED AREAS



24. **PROPOSED SHORELINE RESTORATION**
PROVIDE SHORELINE STABILIZATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT ALONG THE SHORELINES THROUGH THE SOUTH ISLAND PARK



25. **EXISTING BRIDGE**
EXISTING PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AND CONNECTION TO DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON



26. **EXISTING HISTORIC CEMETERY**
ADJACENT TO SOUTH ISLAND PARK



27. **EXISTING VETERANS MEMORIAL**



Date: July 1, 2013

F. IMPLEMENT THE SIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN





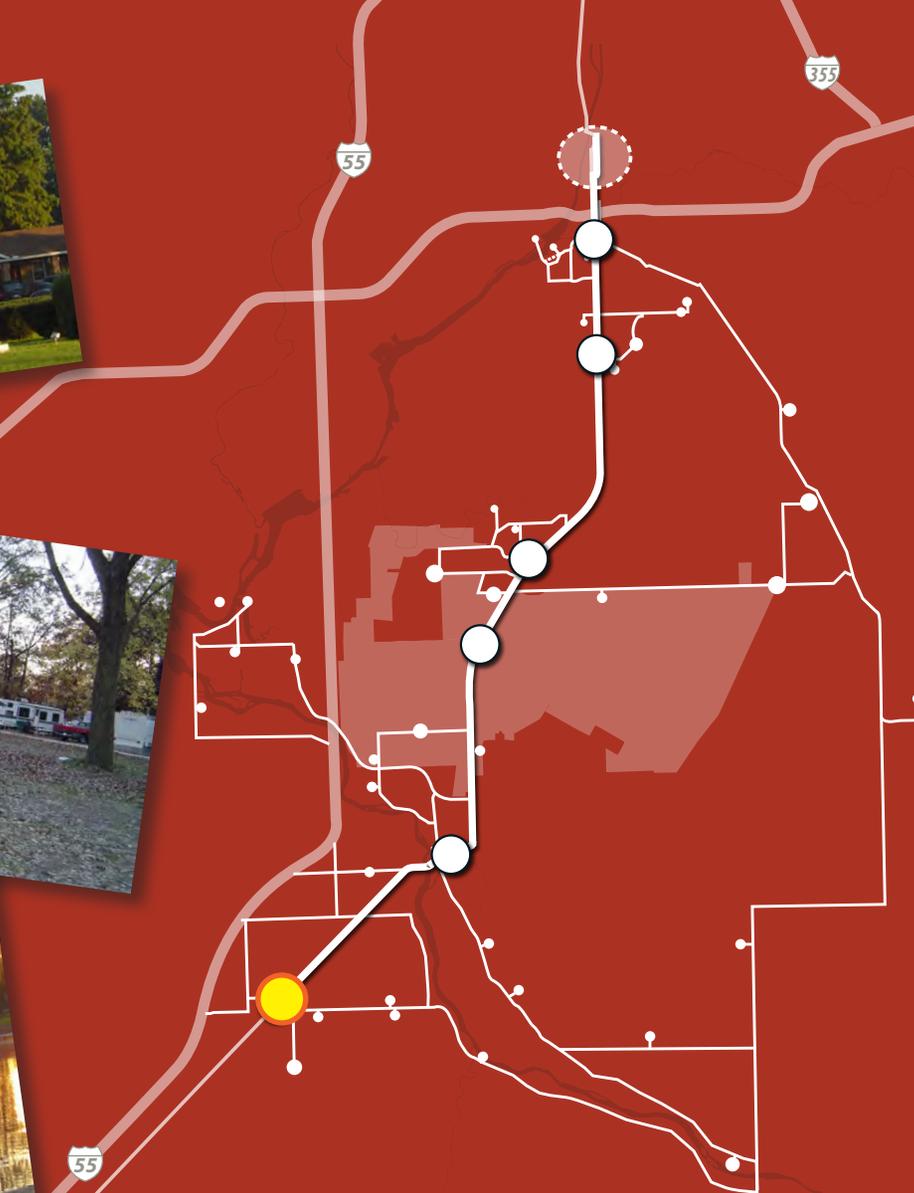
Braidwood Motel



Fossil Rock Campground



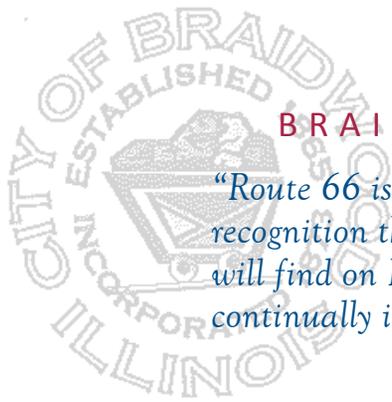
Countryside Village: fabrics, home decor, food & wine



3 F

6 STOPS ON 66

THE BRAIDWOOD STOP



BRAIDWOOD: A ROUTE 66 RED CARPET COMMUNITY

“Route 66 is already a worldwide destination. No amount of money that we can raise will get us the recognition that Route 66 brings with it. Yet many people in the area have no idea where it is and what they will find on Route 66. I believe we should market what we have and work together and individually to continually improve on our destination”


Mayor Bill Rulien
City of Braidwood

A major stop for Route 66 tourists today is the [Polk-A-Dot restaurant](#) in the City of Braidwood, only 5 miles south of the Gemini Giant in Wilmington. An authentic 1950's style drive-in, the Polk-A-Dot's roadside signs and Blues Brothers statues provide a great photo op for 66 fans.

However, Braidwood has much more to offer than just a quick stop for photos and food. The City has already taken bold steps to keep visitors here longer and to make Braidwood not just a stop, but a real destination on the Mother Road.

Braidwood has [two authentic Route 66 Routes](#). From 1926 to 1940, Route 53 was designated as Route 66, and from 1940 to 1957, it was on present day Route 129, and Route 53 became the Alternate Route 66. Route 129 still has some of the original Structures from the 1940s including

the still operating [Braidwood Motel](#), formerly the Ross Motel, which has retained most of the original features for over 70 years.

Braidwood is also home to many natural areas such as the [Braidwood lake](#), [Braidwood Dunes and Mazonia and Sand Ridge Preserves](#). The State fossil the Tully Monster was also first found in Braidwood. [Braidwood Lake](#) is a 2600 acre fishing lake with two boat launches. All boats are required to have gasoline engines and there is no horsepower limit. Shops for bait, gasoline and food are available in Braidwood to serve the needs of fishing and boating. Braidwood's [Fossil Rock campground](#) offers nightly and weekly camping facilities to tourists. [Second Time Around Antique Market](#) and [Countryside Village](#) are great local stores for antiques, gifts and much more.

The new [Route 66 Welcome Center and Park](#) right across the Polk-A-Dot is a great example of local initiatives, and reflects both the goals of the community and this Plan. It invites tourists to walk across Route 66 from the Polk-A-Dot to the park, provides information about Braidwood and other nearby attractions. The new [Braidwood Zoo](#) in the park showcases a collection of fun animal sculptures made with recycled materials by a local folk artist, Jack Barker.

This Plan provides a larger framework to supplement these great community efforts, and recommends the following:



Newly restored Historic Train Depot: Home to the Braidwood Historical Society Museum



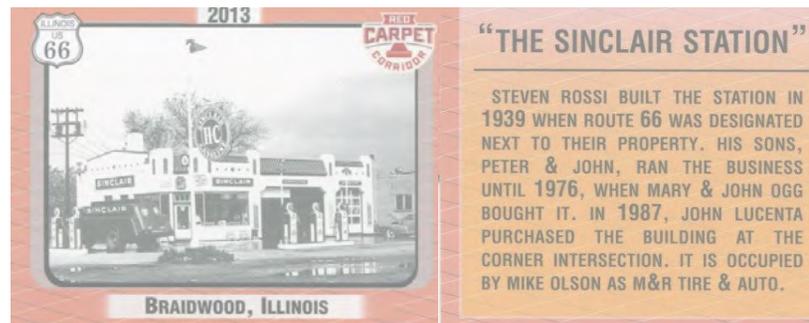
Fishing Tournament on Braidwood Lake



Cruise Nite at the Polk-A-Dot Restaurant



Second Time Around Antiques



A CLEAR STRONG IDENTITY

MARKET THE WHOLE 25 MILE LONG CORRIDOR AS “ONE DESTINATION” WITH BRAIDWOOD ANCHORING THE SOUTH END - NOT AS A QUICK STOP, BUT AS A REAL TOURIST DESTINATION ON THE MOTHER ROAD.

Citywide Garage Sale, Scarecrow Fest, Blueberry Festival, Summerfest, Christmas Lighted Parade and Annual Route 66 10k Race. These should be incorporated into an annual coordinated event program for the whole corridor.

CONNECT BRAIDWOOD DESTINATIONS TO THE ROUTE 66 STOPS

The Polk-A-Dot Restaurant and the new Route 66 Park are stops right on Route 66. Connect other area attractions to these stops with wayfinding, information and signage.

Polk-A-Dot AND THE NEW ROUTE 66 PARK PRESERVE Polk-A-Dot RESTAURANT, ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING AUTHENTIC ICONS OF THE MOTHER ROAD

MAKE THE ROUTE 66 SECTION BETWEEN THE Polk-A-Dot AND THE NEW COMMUNITY PARK SPECIAL WITH 66 SIGNS ON THE ROAD PAVEMENT AND WELL DEFINED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS



MARKET BRAIDWOOD EVENTS AS PART OF THE 6 STOPS ON 66 EXPERIENCE

The city already hosts a number of events including the Annual Bass Fishing Tournament, Red Carpet Corridor Fest, Route 66 Cruisin’,

Braidwood Zoo and Polk-A-Dot Restaurant On Route 66



UNIQUE NATURAL AREAS SO CLOSE TO ROUTE 66

Over 1,000 acres of preserves for

Fishing
Hunting
Boating
Fossil
Collecting
Bird
Watching
Biking
Hiking



HIGHLIGHT THE UNIQUE NATURAL AREAS THAT ARE SO CLOSE TO ROUTE 66 AND ARE NOT WELL KNOWN TODAY, including:

- BRAIDWOOD LAKE
- MAZONIA BRAIDWOOD FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA
- BRAIDWOOD DUNES AND SAVANNA NATURE PRESERVE
- SAND RIDGE SAVANNA NATURE PRESERVE
- WILMINGTON SHRUB PRAIRIE NATURE PRESERVE

WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED SIGNAGE FROM INTERSTATE 55 TO THE WEST AND INTERSTATE 80 TO THE NORTH TO DIRECT ROUTE 66 TOURISTS TO BRAIDWOOD

PROVIDE WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AT THE OTHER 66 STOPS TO LET VISITORS KNOW ABOUT PLACES TO VISIT IN BRAIDWOOD

BIKE TRAIL ALONG ROUTE 66

MAKE BRAIDWOOD A PART OF THE REGIONAL BIKE TRAIL SYSTEM BY PROVIDING A TRAIL ALONG ROUTE 66 TO DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON

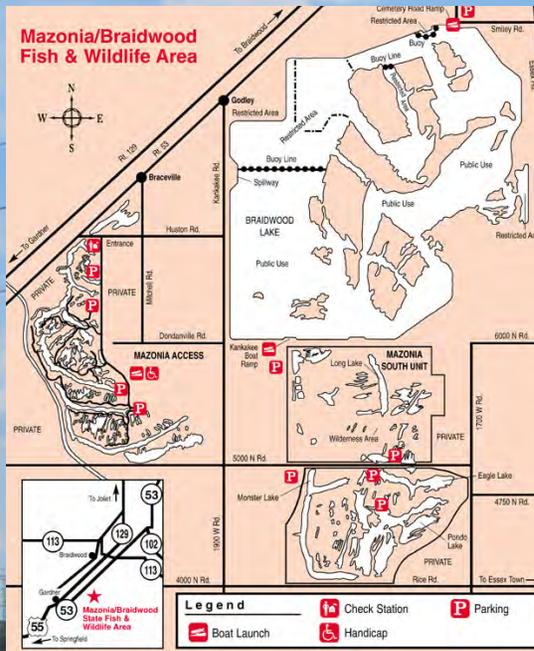
CREATE A TRAILHEAD AT THE NEW ROUTE 66 WELCOME CENTER AND PARK. THIS CAN LONG TERM BE A STOP THAT PROVIDES BIKE SHARE FACILITIES AND ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATIONS.

CONTINUE TO MARKET THE AREA FOR BED AND BREAKFASTS, MOTELS AND 66 THEME RETAIL

A CRITICAL NEED FOR SIGNAGE



BRAIDWOOD MAZONIA IS A HIDDEN GEM WAITING TO BE EXPLORED



Braidwood Lake, owned by Commonwealth Edison, is a partially perched, cooling lake. The lake was considered a semi-private area used by employees of Com Ed until the fall of 1981 when the Department of Natural Resources acquired a long term lease agreement from Com Ed allowing for general public access. Braidwood Lake currently is used for fishing, waterfowl hunting, fossil hunting by permit and as a waterfowl refuge.

Mazonia is well known for Pennsylvanian age fossils. The Tully Monster, State Fossil of Illinois, was found here in 1958. A day permit is required to collect fossils in the area.

FOSSIL HUNTING CAN BE DEVELOPED AS A UNIQUE ACTIVITY AND MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION TO BRAIDWOOD.

ADDITIONAL AMENITIES AT BRAIDWOOD LAKE FOR VISITORS, BOATING & FISHING

- TRAIL CONNECTION FROM RTE 66
- VIEWING AND FISHING PIERS
- BENCHES
- COVERED OPEN AIR PAVILION FOR PICNICKING
- INDOOR FACILITY WITH BATHROOMS, DRINKING FOUNTAINS, VENDING AND MAPS OF THE LAKE AND OTHER DESTINATIONS



Tully Monster Fossil



Fossil Hunting in Sylvania, Ohio

Over 300 million years ago, Northwest Ohio was dominated by a sea full of life. Sylvania, Ohio today is one of just a handful of fossil hunting parks in the nation. This ADA-assessable quarry is in a safe and controlled environment, and provides great adventure for children.