

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name URBAN ROUTE 66: WILLIAMS

other names/site number Bill Williams Avenue / AR-03-07-01-1168

2. Location

street & number Bill Williams Avenue / /not for publication

city, town Williams / /vicinity

state Arizona code AZ county Coconino code 005 zip code 86046

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ Total
		<u>1</u>	

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic US Route 66 In Arizona

Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National  
Register \_\_\_\_\_

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

USDA - Forest Service

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date 1-16-89

Arizona State Historic Preservation Office  
State Historic Preservation Office

5. National Park Service Certification

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
city street

[Interstate Highway]

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)
N/A

Materials enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls

roof

other asphalt over concrete surfacing

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Route 66 through Williams began as a dirt street in the center of town which was later cindered and then paved. Despite some modern encroachments, most of Route 66 through Williams is lined with properties dating from the historic period. The four block long Williams Historic Business District (listed on the National Register 12/30/84) dates to the turn-of-the-century. It is flanked on the east and west by a commercial strip with motels, service stations, and restaurants dating to the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. One block of this commercial strip is west of the business district, and four blocks are to the east. The distribution and construction dates of these associated properties in Williams are directly related to construction of Route 66. Williams claims the distinction of being the last town in America through which Federally-designated US Route 66 passed. It is a good example of Route 66 in an urban setting.

In 1921, Williams had a 1.6 mile-long graded and cindered roadway that replaced an earlier muddy track. It was paved with Portland cement in two separate projects: the west end in 1928 and the east end in 1932. In 1928, 3/4 mile of the road was paved with cement from the west town limit to Second Street, now the center of town, making downtown Williams one of the first sections along newly-designated US Route 66 to be paved. In 1932, the remaining 1 1/4 miles of Bill Williams Avenue through the east side of Williams was paved and officially dedicated as US Route 66. This opened the way to development on the east end of town and soon tourist facilities--motels, restaurants, gas stations, and curio shops--grew up along the route.

In an effort to relieve traffic congestion on US Route 66 in Williams, the Arizona Department of Transportation built a new overpass on the east end of town in about 1957. At the same time, they dedicated Railroad Avenue as US Route 66 for westbound traffic, while Bill Williams Avenue became one-way for eastbound traffic.

Williams continues to cater to the tourist trade, although Interstate 40 bypassed Route 66 on October 13, 1984. Bill Williams Avenue, the road that was Route 66, became quieter and less crowded, recalling the unhurried pace of the 1930s. The original cement pavement from 1928 and 1932 remained intact through the years under successive layers of asphalt paving. In the summer of 1988, the concrete surfacing had to be removed during a major repaving project. Despite the loss of original pavement, the integrity of Urban Route 66 in Williams is closely related to its original location, and the association, setting, and feeling that adjacent properties from the historic period impart to it.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Transportation	ca. 1920-1944	
	Cultural Affiliation	
	N/A	
Significant Person	Architect/Affiliation	
N/A	N/A	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Route 66 through Williams is significant for its association with Historic US Route 66 in Arizona and the theme of transportation in America between ca. 1920 and 1944. This property provides an interesting study in the politics and geography of the highway in a town setting.

Population centers were the first part of Route 66 to be paved. Organized towns would clamor for pavement, and they also had the means to pay for it. In 1927, the Bureau of Public Roads surveyed Route 66 on Bill Williams Avenue from the western town limit to Second Street, where it turned north. Contractor Frank Parrot of Tucson began work in April, 1928 with grading, followed by construction of a concrete bridge over Cataract Creek at Sixth St. The June 15, 1928 Williams News proclaimed that "paving of Highway 66, otherwise known as Bill Williams Avenue, through Williams . . . is progressing at a rapid rate, and it is expected that the last shovel of cement will have been poured by June 24." It was finally complete on July 15, 1928.

This much-heralded street paving was paid for largely by the town and its individual citizens. The government provided 71 percent of the cost and the town paid the remainder for paving an 18' wide strip down the center of the street. This left 13' on each side of the strip to the sidewalks unpaved. Downtown property owners were assessed the cost of paving these side strips. The Bureau of Public Roads (BPA) was willing to provide an 18' strip of pavement all the way through town, but Williams refused the offer, preferring to bear the cost itself of paving the old route north on Second Street and east on Rodeo Road. This road led to an intersection with the road to Flagstaff and the old Grand Canyon approach road. Several "tourist camps" and gas stations were located north of town, and the owners likely feared the consequences of a bypass. However, when the new Grand Canyon approach road opened in the summer of 1930, the junction with Route 66 was moved 2 1/2 miles east of Williams. This new intersection lured travelers away from the old route, anyway.

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National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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The state highway engineers eventually prevailed and, as part of the major reconstruction of Route 66 between Ash Fork and Flagstaff in 1932, the eastern 1 1/2 miles of Bill Williams Avenue was paved to a width of 18'. A 30' wide concrete railroad underpass on the east end made railroad crossings, a constant hazard on the old route, unnecessary. The controversial nature of this realignment is hinted at in the Dec. 2, 1932 Williams News: "After years of questioning, doubting, reassuring, disputing, and yes, incriminations, the town of Williams finds herself with an underpass which marks Bill Williams Avenue completely across the town as the permanent route of Highway 66. . . . It is generally felt that the town will be very much benefitted by the underpass; although, as always with the changing of the routing of the road, considerable hardship has been worked upon some of those who had made improvements along the part of the highway now abandoned as a link in Highway 66. . . . It is freely predicted that many contemplated improvements along Bill Williams Avenue will be constructed forthwith."

Indeed, construction of motels, restaurants, curio shops, and gas stations began almost immediately on the east end of town. By the mid 1940s, it was lined with businesses, many of which are still extant. They far outnumbered the tourist-related businesses on the west end of town, supporting the theory that towns along Route 66 tended to expand eastward to capture the west-bound tourist trade. Dividing Williams by its two major cross streets into four-block-long quadrants, a 1948 Sanborne fire insurance map reveals the following counts of tourist facilities on Route 66:

NW: 5	NE: 12
SW: 4	SE: 11

The majority of new businesses were built on the east end of town along the newly-opened stretch of Route 66. The map reveals, among other things, that Williams was a vibrant community catering to the tourist trade. It expanded in both directions from the turn-of-the-century town center, demonstrating the shift from a centralized downtown focused on the railroad to strip development encouraged by automobile use.

The increase in travel on Route 66 through Williams has been called by one historian ". . . the most important factor in the history of Williams since 1930" (Fuchs 1955: 146). Tourism continues to play a major role in Williams' economy today, despite the bypass of Route 66 by Interstate 40 in 1984. Economic stagnation over the last several decades has effectively frozen the physical appearance of Williams to its era of greatest prosperity, circa 1940. In both function and appearance, Williams embodies the spirit of historic Route 66.

Within this town environment, historic buildings define the limits of the nominated property and add to the historic setting of Route 66. The route through Williams retains integrity of design, location, feeling, association, and setting.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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The Williams Historic Preservation Commission passed a resolution supporting the Kaibab National Forest nomination of "Urban Route 66" through Williams and presented it to the Williams City Council. The City Council adopted this resolution as City Resolution Number 795 and passed it unanimously on January 28, 1988. The Arizona Department of Transportation also supports the National Register nomination; however, jurisdiction for the street will transfer from them to the City of Williams in the spring of 1989.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register\* previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State hist. preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

\* Williams Historic Business District, adjacent to property, listed 12/30/84.

Specify repository:

Kaibab National Forest

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3.2 acres

UTM References

A 1|2| 3|9|1|5|5|0| 3|9|0|1|1|0|0|  
 Zone Easting Northing

C    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  
 Zone Easting Northing

B 1|2| 3|9|2|4|7|5| 3|9|0|1|4|5|0|  
 Zone Easting Northing

D    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a .6 mile (1 km) long segment of Bill Williams Avenue in Williams, AZ. Specifically, it runs between the west end of the concrete bridge at 6th street and the east curblineline of Pine street, and is 44 feet wide from curblineline to curblineline. See attached map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is based on a survey of associated properties and integrity of location. Route 66 was realigned after the historic period on both ends of town, disqualifying those sections. Within town, a majority of adjacent properties date to the historic period. The 1928 concrete bridge on the west end is strongly associated with the original paving of Route 66 and is therefore included, although several of the tourism businesses on the adjacent block postdate the historic period.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Teri A. Cleeland, Archeologist

organization Kaibab National Forest

street & number 800 S. Sixth St.

city or town Williams

date August 4, 1988

telephone (602) 635-2681

state AZ zip code 86046

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Arizona Highways: April 1927, April, May, June, July, August 1928; August 1932

Plans on file at ADOT Engineering Records Division, Phoenix: Project FA 89-A (1928 Williams street paving plats); "As Built" Williams street plats, 1933.

ADOT photographs of Route 66 in and near Williams, ca. 1940. Box 4, ADOT records on file at Arizona State Capitol Archives, Phoenix.

Fuchs, James R. "A History of Williams, Arizona, 1876-1951." University of Arizona Social Science Bulletin, No. 23. University of Arizona, Tucson, 1955, pg. 123-4.

Sanborne Fire Insurance map dated 1948, at Northern Arizona University Special Collections Library.

Williams Town Council meeting minutes: July 16, 1926; Jan. 21, 1927; April 24, 1928; July 9, 1932; on file at the Williams City Office.

Williams News: April 27, 1928; June 15, 1928; Dec. 2, 1932.

Wurtz, Michael J. "Route 66: From Beale to Bypassed", student paper on file at Northern Arizona University Special Collections Library and the Kaibab National Forest. February 11, 1987.

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PHOTOGRAPHS Page 1

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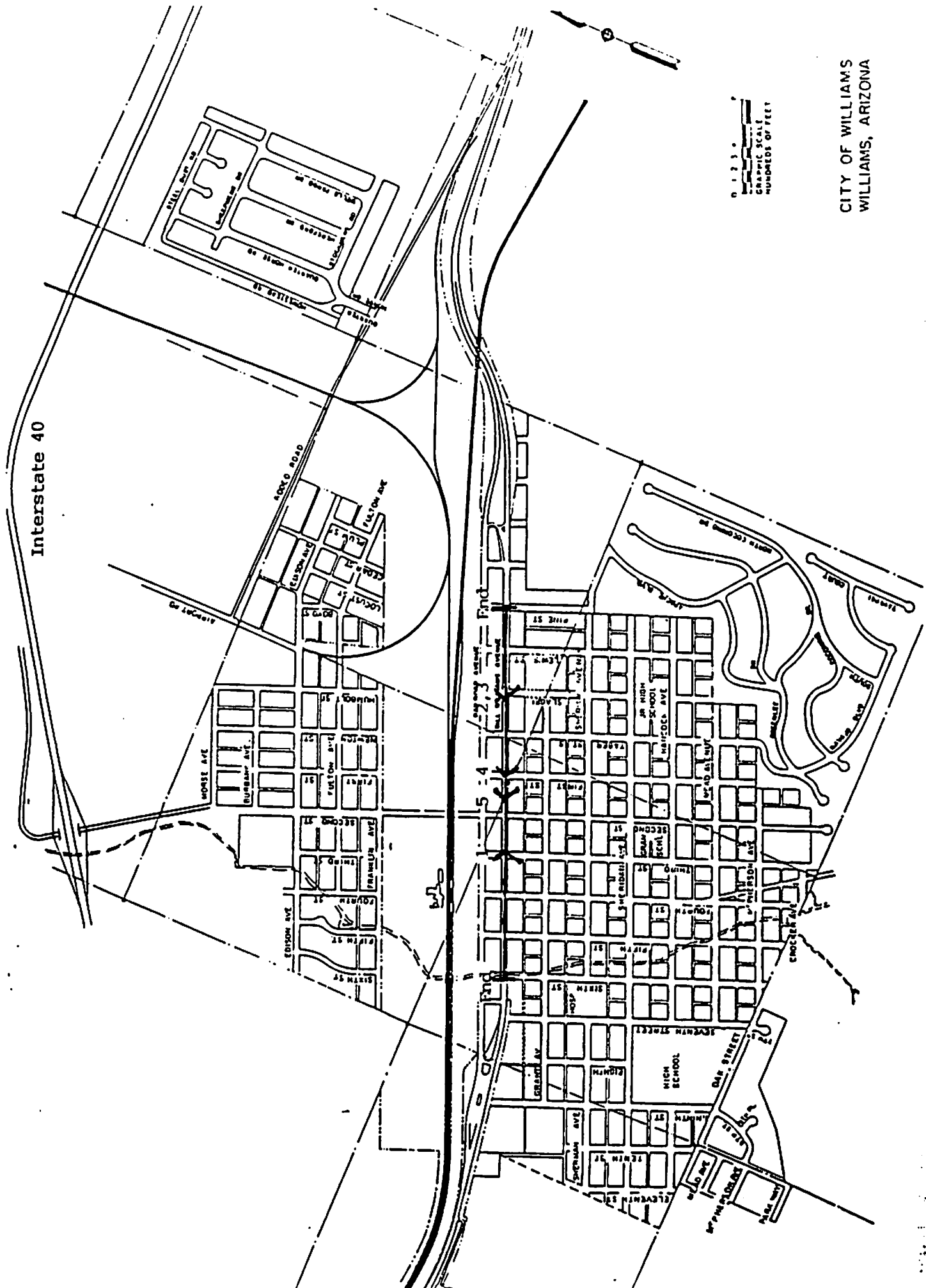
THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS THE SAME FOR ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ACCOMPANYING THIS NOMINATION:

- 1). Urban Route 66: Williams
- 2). Williams, Arizona

INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS:

- 3). Photographer unknown
  - 4). ca. 1939
  - 5). Kaibab National Forest, Williams, Arizona
  - 6). Facing east, from Third Street down Route 66
  - 7). #1
- 
- 3). Photographer unknown (Arizona Department of Transportation Photo)
  - 4). 1940
  - 5). Arizona State Capitol Archives (Kaibab NF also retains a negative)
  - 6). Facing west, from Slagel Street down Route 66
  - 7). #2
- 
- 3). Teri A. Cleeland
  - 4). June, 1988
  - 5). Kaibab National Forest, Williams, Arizona
  - 6). Approximately the same view as #2 (west from Slagel Street)
  - 7). #3
- 
- 3). Photographer unknown (Arizona Department of Transportation Photo)
  - 4). 1940
  - 5). Arizona State Capitol Archives (Kaibab NF also retains a negative)
  - 6). Facing west, from First Street down Route 66
  - 7). #4
- 
- 3). Teri A. Cleeland
  - 4). June, 1988
  - 5). Kaibab National Forest, Williams, Arizona
  - 6). Facing west, from Second Street down Route 66
  - 7). #5





CITY OF WILLIAMS  
WILLIAMS, ARIZONA

"URBAN ROUTE 66: WILLIAMS" (Bill Williams Ave.) Boundaries and photo points indicated.