

# Rethinking I-94 Tier 1 – Section 106 Process

## Communications and Engagement Plan

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### Project Overview

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is conducting an in-depth, multi-phase study of the Interstate 94 (I-94) corridor between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul. Rethinking I-94, as described by MnDOT, will prioritize “the well-being of those who live, work and play along the corridor, with the goal of enhancing mobility, safety and interconnectivity.”

The first phase of Rethinking I-94, completed between 2016 and 2018, focused on public engagement to understand what people want from and think of the I-94 corridor. The second phase of Rethinking I-94 will result in a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document and continue engagement with communities that currently or historically lived along the corridor. Project alternatives have not been developed. A preferred alternative will be selected by the end of the Tier 1 study.

Because the project will require permits, and will likely receive funding from, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), it must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. MnDOT’s Cultural Resources Unit (CRU), acting as the delegated agent for FHWA, contracted the professional services of Hess, Roise and Company and their subconsultants Zan Associates, Land Relations, and Mead & Hunt to complete select tasks under the Section 106 process:

1. Project Team meetings with MnDOT CRU
2. Consultation, Public Outreach, and Engagement
3. Research Design and Literature Search
4. Historic Context
5. Phase I and Phase II Evaluations
6. Preliminary APE Development

This document is part of the deliverables for Task 2: Consultation, Public Outreach, and Engagement. To ensure that opportunities for public involvement are inclusive, effective, and transparent, the engagement strategies in this plan were developed using best practices (See Attachment 1 for best practice research) identified during the first phase of the Rethinking I-94

engagement. The purpose of this communications and engagement plan is to outline the strategies for initiating and engaging consulting parties as well as communicating and engaging the communities along the project corridor for the Section 106 process. It also provides an overview of the project schedule, key stakeholders, engagement phases, and activities for both consulting parties and public engagement, key messages, engagement approach, potential conflicts, and engagement documentation. The plan is meant to serve as a living document and will be updated as needed throughout the course of the project.

## **Section 106 Process Project Schedule**

September 2020 – March 2023

### **Key Stakeholders**

- Federal agencies
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Local regulatory agencies
- Park boards
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Historical Preservation Commissions and historical societies
- Neighborhood community groups
- District Councils/neighborhood organizations
- Business associations
- Cultural organizations
- Social services organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Art-based organizations
- Advocacy groups
- Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)
- People who live and work within .25 miles of the Rethinking I-94 project corridor
- Seniors
- Youth
- Women and LGBTQ communities
- Low-income communities

### **Consultation**

The Section 106 process requires engagement with consulting parties. Consulting parties include, but are not limited to, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and federally recognized Native American tribes (see attachment for the Consulting Party List). As a part of the Section 106 regulations, the role of a consulting party is to:

- advise on the identification and evaluation of historic properties;
- provide comments on the potential effects of the identified properties; and
- participate in the resolution of adverse effects.

Initiation of consultation and engaging consulting parties will occur in coordination with the MnDOT NEPA/MEPA environmental review process. Updates and notification of engagement activities will be provided to the consulting parties in advance.

### Consulting Party Engagement Phases, Activities and Deliverables

Rethinking I-94 Tier 1 Architecture/History will include consulting party engagement for the Section 106 review process. Additional Section 106 consultation will occur in later phases of the Rethinking I-94 project.

Engagement Phases	Activities
<p><b>Phase 1:</b> Research</p>	<p>The Section 106 regulation <b>§ 800.4 (a)(2) Identification of Historic Properties</b> requires the review of existing information on historic properties in the project corridor. Phase 1 will also include identifying consulting parties and putting together an initial consulting party list.</p> <p>A Research Design and Literature Search will be developed as the first step in the development of a historic context and identification of anticipated property types for the Study Area. It will follow the guidance of the <i>Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Planning, Identification and Evaluation</i>, as well as MnDOT CRU’s and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation’s guidelines.</p> <p><b>Deliverable(s):</b> Research Design and Literature Search, Consulting Party List and Communications and Engagement Plan</p>
<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Engage, gather, and identify</p>	<p>The Section 106 regulation <b>§ 800.4 Identification of Historic Properties</b> requires engaging consulting parties in identifying and evaluating historic properties. This phase will include initiation of consultation, and review of deliverables for Tasks 2 through 6 listed above.</p> <p><b>Deliverable(s):</b> Report on the reviews of the Research Design and Literature Search, the Historic Context, the limited Phase I and Phase II Evaluations, and the Preliminary APE Development.</p>

### Consulting Party Engagement Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives for consultation are:

- Provide inclusive, effective, and transparent engagement opportunities for consulting parties according to the Section 106 regulations.
- Identify community members in the project corridor who are knowledgeable about the area’s history and culture. Work with these contacts to gather information about

significant historic resources and events, traditional cultural properties, and other potentially historic aspects of the community to expand on information obtained during the literature search. Incorporate input into the Section 106 process, keep consulting parties informed about the Section 106 process, and engage those wishing to be a consulting party.

## Public Engagement

Public engagement with the diverse ethnic groups and neighborhoods in the project area by MnDOT Metro District has already been an important component of earlier phases of the Rethinking I-94 project. As a foundation for “rethinking I-94” and the Section 106 process, it is important to understand the rich history of this dense urban corridor and the people, organizations, buildings, landscapes, and other elements, such as events and activities, that played significant roles in the community’s evolution over time.

### Public Engagement Phases and Activities

Public engagement will be conducted in conjunction with the Section 106 consultation.

Engagement Phases	Activities
<b>Phase 1:</b> Background research	Conduct best practices research through key staff interviews, desktop research, and putting together an initial public engagement stakeholder list.
<b>Phase 2:</b> Engage, gather, and identify	Gather historical information/stories through in-person and virtual engagement with community organizations and members of the community in the project corridor.
<b>Phase 3:</b> Report on findings	Provide updates and share initial results on the Section 106 process collected through in-person and virtual engagement with consulting parties, community organizations and members of the community in the project corridor.
<b>Phase 4:</b> Re-engage	Provide updates and share results on the Section 106 process.

## Engagement Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of public engagement are:

- Provide inclusive, effective, and transparent engagement opportunities for the public to engage and provide input on the historical findings in Phase 2.
- Gather information about the who, what, when, where, and why of historical importance in the community. Information collected from the community will provide an inclusive understanding of the historic context and support final historical documentation.
- Incorporate public input into the Section 106 process and keep the public informed about the Section 106 process.

## Communications and Engagement Key Messages

The key messages being conveyed to consulting parties will include:

- The Section 106 review process is led by MnDOT CRU, and the purpose is to identify historic properties that are within the area of potential effects along the interstate corridor.
- Engagement is being conducted to collect information and to understand the people, places, and events that played a significant role in the community's history. The information collected will be included within a historic context of a study area that encompasses the Rethinking I-94 project area.
- The Section 106 review process began in September 2020 and will continue through March 2023.
- Information about the Section 106 process and public engagement events and activities, related to the Section 106 regulations.
- Information about ways people can stay updated and engaged in the Section 106 review process, including next steps.
- General overview of the Rethinking I-94 project and who they can contact or where they can go for more information.

## Engagement Approach

To capture the rich history of this dense urban corridor and the people, organizations, buildings, landscapes, and other elements, such as events and activities, that played significant roles in the community's evolution over time, engagement with consulting parties and the public will involve asking questions related to gathering and meaningful places, buildings/locations, activities/recreations, and people.

- **Building/Locations** – Collecting stories on historical significance of buildings/locations will help to further identify and confirm the historic properties and location within the project corridor.

- **Gathering places** – Collecting information on where people gather and socialize together, whether in the past or in the present, will help to further identify and understand, and confirm the historic properties and significance within the project corridor.
- **Activities/Recreation** – Collecting stories and information on activities/recreation will provide an understanding of events and activities that took place in or around historic properties and their potential importance to the community. Activities/recreation and events are important in understanding why a property should or should not be considered historically significant.
- **People** – Collecting stories and information on who were involved in historical events will help to further identify and confirm the significance of historic properties within the project corridor.

### **Potential Conflicts**

The Section 106 review process is a part of the second phase of engagement for the Rethinking I-94 corridor. It is understood that communities in the project corridor have been engaged multiple times on different aspects of the project and may be experiencing engagement fatigue. The Section 106 review process is also being conducted at the same time as the MnDOT NEPA/MEPA environmental review process. With this understanding, engagement materials and activities for the Section 106 process will clearly state the project purpose and schedule.

The construction of Interstate 94 between Saint Paul and Minneapolis demolished thriving communities and altered the surrounding neighborhoods. Considering this is a unique and sensitive topic, recommendations in this Section 106 communications and engagement plan will help to ensure all communities have equal opportunity to participate. Engagement materials and activities will be inclusive, effective, transparent, and tailored to the unique and diverse communities within the Rethinking I-94 project corridor.

### **Engagement Documentation**

The consultant team will document and provide engagement summaries for all communications and engagement events and activities. At the end of the project, the consultant team will provide a report summarizing stakeholder engagement and communications. Engagement activities and summaries will help to inform the Section 106 process findings and results for each of the engagement phases and the final report.

### Consulting Party Engagement Strategies

Phase 1				
Engagement Strategies	Purpose	Deliverable(s)	Schedule	Responsibility
Communications and engagement plan	The purpose of the plan is to outline the strategies for communicating and engaging the multicultural communities along the project corridor for the Section 106 process.	Communications and engagement plan document	March 2021 – June 2021	Zan Associates puts together the communications and engagement plan, and Land Relations, Hess Roise, MnDOT CRU, and SHPO review communications and engagement plan draft.
Identify consulting parties	Identify consulting parties and those who wish to be consulting parties under the Section 106 umbrella (36 CFR 800).	Consulting party list	March 2021 – July 2021	Zan Associates puts together a recommended consulting party list.  Land Relations, Hess Roise, and MnDOT CRU review list.
Research Design and Literature Search of historical context	A research design and literature search for the development of the historic context within the project corridor will also be completed during this phase prior to initiation of consultation.	Research design and literature search document	December 2020 – June 2021	Hess Roise, Land Relations, and Mead & Hunt put together research design and literature search for developing the historic context within the project corridor. MnDOT CRU and consulting parties review draft.

Phase 2				
Engagement Strategies	Purpose	Deliverable(s)	Schedule	Responsibility
Initiate consultation	Invite consulting parties to partake in the Section 106 review process.	Invitation letter	June 2021	<p>Zan Associates drafts invitation and tracks consulting list.</p> <p>Land Relations, Hess Roise, and MnDOT CRU review invitation letter.</p> <p>MnDOT CRU sends invitation letter out to consulting party list.</p>
Consultation coordination meetings	Share information and provide project updates on the Section 106 process with consulting parties; Review, provide input, and help with drafting of documents related to the regulations; up to five in-person meetings with consulting parties during Phase 2-4 of the Section 106 process.	<p>Meeting outline, meeting handouts, materials, presentation slides, staff talking points, one-pager, etc.</p> <p>Project website text and visuals for Section 106</p> <p>Draft and final report on the initial results and findings of historic context</p>	Summer 2021 – Spring 2023	<p>Zan Associates coordinates meetings, prepare meeting materials including PPT and outreach materials, prepare draft submittal letters and invitation letters, and prepare meeting notes/summaries.</p> <p>Land Relations, Hess Roise, and MnDOT CRU review meeting materials, notes/summaries, and attend/staff meetings.</p> <p>Hess Roise, Land Relations, and historical team puts together reports and MnDOT CRU reviews drafts before it goes out to the consulting parties.</p>

Phase 2				
Engagement Strategies	Purpose	Deliverable(s)	Schedule	Responsibility
Individual/Small group discussions	Share information, review cultural context, and provide project updates on the Section 106 process; gather historical information from these meetings to further identify and confirm historical information. Meetings will help to inform and draft up reports related to the regulations; Up to 20 engagement activities with consulting parties.	Event/activity list and engagement materials  Project website text and visuals for Section 106  Draft and final report on the initial results and findings of historic context	Summer 2021 – Spring 2023	Zan Associates to coordinate individual and small group discussion or focus group. Zan to prepare meeting materials and provide meeting notes/summaries.  Land Relations, Hess Roise and MnDOT CRU to review meeting materials and attend/staff engagement activities as needed.

*\*All project materials will be shared with the project team and MnDOT CRU for review and approval before sharing with the public.*

*\*All project materials will be ADA accessible and will be translated as needed.*

## Public Engagement Strategies

Phase 1				
Engagement Strategies	Purpose	Deliverable(s)	Schedule	Responsibility
Best practice research	Research and documentation of best practices for public engagement related to Section 106 process. Best practice research includes desk research and interviews with key MnDOT, city and consultant staff who worked on the first phase of engagement for the Rethinking I-94 project.	Best practice documentation and summary of interviews	December 2020 – April 2021	<p>Zan Associates develops questions and schedule interviews with key staff.</p> <p>Zan Associates and Land Relations conduct best practice research and interviews.</p> <p>Hess Roise and MnDOT CRU review questions and materials.</p> <p>Hess Roise and team to conduct literature review</p> <p>MnDOT CRU to review draft and provide comments.</p>
Communications and engagement plan	The purpose of the plan is to outline the strategies for consultation of consulting parties and communicating and engaging the multicultural communities along the project corridor for the Section 106 process.	<p>Communications and engagement plan document</p> <p>Provide engagement plan overview content for project website</p> <p>Provide overview of engagement plan with link to website in consulting party correspondence</p>	March 2021 – June 2021	Zan Associates puts together the communications and engagement plan, and Land Relations, Hess Roise and MnDOT CRU review communications and engagement plan draft.

Phase 2-4				
Engagement Strategies	Purpose	Deliverable(s)	Schedule	Responsibility
Virtual listening sessions/focus groups	Virtual focus groups will be conducted as a part of the initiation of consultation to gather historical/cultural information from the community and to discuss and review historic/cultural context and research findings. These will be conducted with different multi-cultural groups in the community; up to 10 meetings with stakeholder groups.	Meeting handouts, materials, and/or PPT slides	Summer 2021 – Spring 2023	Zan Associates coordinates small group discussion or focus group. Zan prepares meeting materials and provide meeting notes/summaries.  Land Relations, Hess Roise, and MnDOT CRU review meeting materials and attend/staff meetings.
Attend NEPA/MEPA public meetings	Share information and provide project updates on the Section 106 process; gather historical information from these meetings to further identify and confirm historical information within the project corridor; up to five public NEPA/MEPA public meetings	Public meeting handouts, materials, and/or presentation slides, talking points, one-page  Project website text and visuals for Section 106  Draft and final report on the initial results and findings of historic context	Summer 2021 – Spring 2023*  *Schedule is contingent on the NEPA process	Zan Associates works with Metro District NEPA/MEPA staff and track their schedule for public meetings; Zan to prepare meeting materials including presentation slides and outreach materials. Zan attends meetings and prepare meeting summaries.  Land Relations, Hess Roise, and MnDOT CRU review meeting materials and attend/staff meetings as needed.

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