

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Community Leaders Meeting – July 28, 2020

Agenda

- Phase 1
- Environmental Process

Phase 1

About the Communities

Fast facts

- 15-mile corridor
- 250,000 people live within 1-mile of I-94
- 9 St. Paul District Councils
- 14 Minneapolis neighborhoods
- Economically and racially diverse
- 6 primary ethnic communities:
 - American Indian, African-American, Latino, Euro-American, Asian-American, Recent African Immigrant

About the Communities

32.6%

Of households
live in
poverty

12%

Of households
primarily speak an
African language
other than English

5%

Of households
primarily speak
Spanish
other than English

2%

Of households
primarily speak
Hmong
other than English

About the Communities

23

Neighborhoods

70

Schools

10

Stadiums/arenas

54

Parks/green spaces

59

Places of worship

7

Libraries

About the Highway

2+ million

Transit users per year

8,000

Freight trips per day

15

Miles of infrastructure

80+

Lane miles of pavement

4

Tunnels

4

Average hours of
congestion per day

145

Bridges

150,000+

Vehicles per day

About the Highway

Traffic and congestion

- One of the most heavily used — and congested — highways in the state
- Critical route for commuters, freight, transit
- Congestion adds about 20 minutes to rush hour trips
- About half the trips begin in the neighborhoods near I-94
- Only a small percentage of trips go all the way through the study area

Seven out of the twelve pedestrian-only bridges are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which protects the rights of people with disabilities.

Pavement is between 29 and 55 years old. It was originally designed to last 25 years.

The crash rate is twice the average in the metro area, largely due to congestion.

Phase 1 2016-2018

- 2,200 completed baseline surveys
- 75 people participated in listening sessions from more than 50 organizations
- 800+ phone interviews from segment survey
- 1200+ online surveys from segment surveys
- 6 visioning workshops
- 15 community events
- 325+ comments from online interactive map
- 75+ participants from Smart Growth America
- 250+ one-on-one meetings

Project Phases



Phase 1 UNDERSTANDING

2016 to 2018

- Conduct initial engagement
- Assess existing conditions
- Explore improvement concepts



Phase 2 ENVIRONMENTAL

- Continue engagement
- Prepare environmental document
- Develop and evaluate alternatives
- Identify actions to address needs



Ongoing IMPLEMENTATION

- Continue engagement
- Implement vision, strategies and policies from Phases 1 & 2
- Design & construct projects as funding allows

Phase 1 Common Themes From Community

- Congestion issues
- Safety issues – bicycle, pedestrian, motorist
- Improved health and environment – noise, air quality
- No identity or sense of place
- Need for more job opportunities
- Better connections across the freeway
- More inclusivity in planning needed

Environmental Process

Project Phases

We are here



Phase 1 UNDERSTANDING

2016 to 2018

- Conduct initial engagement
- Assess existing conditions
- Explore improvement concepts



Phase 2 ENVIRONMENTAL

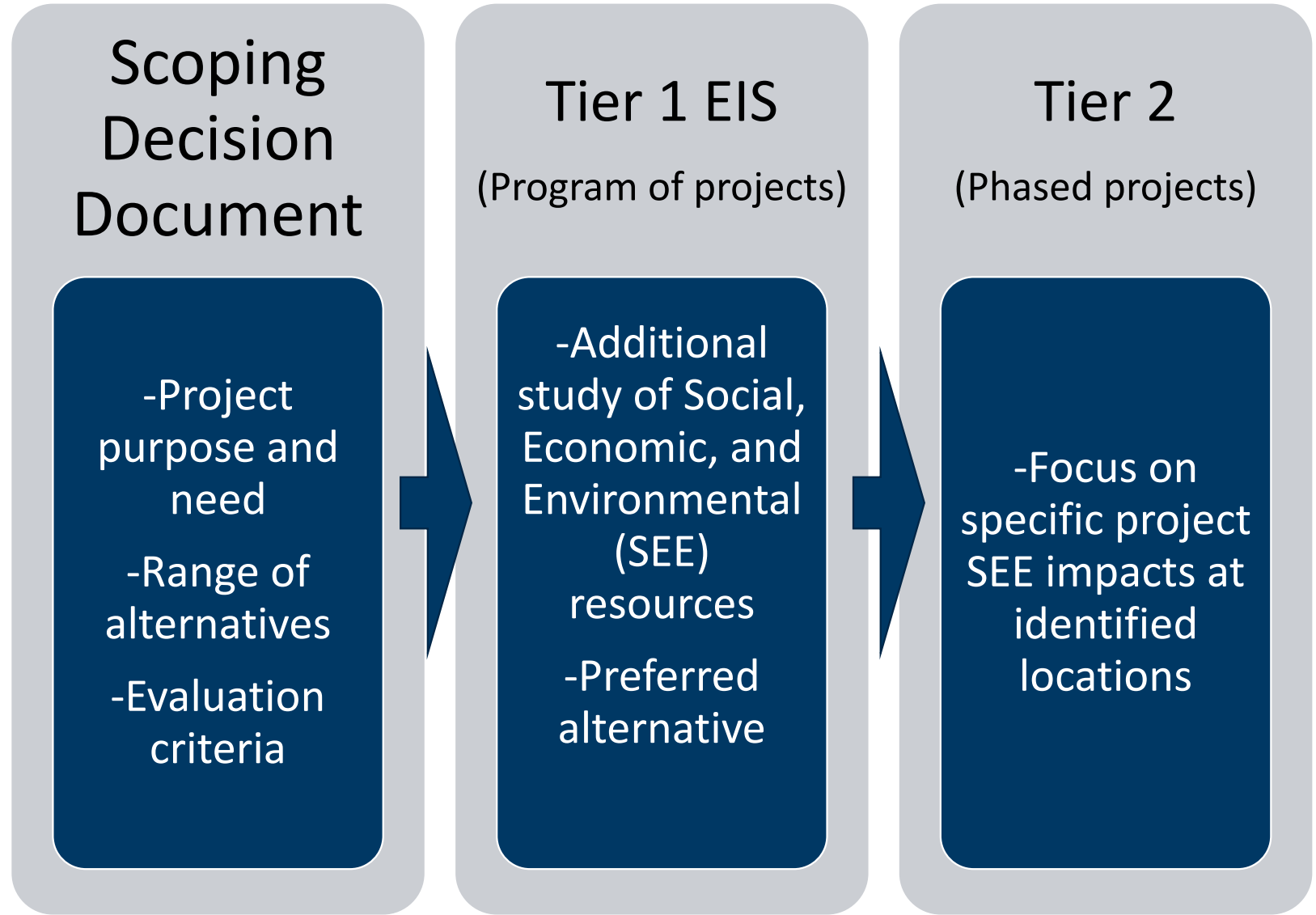
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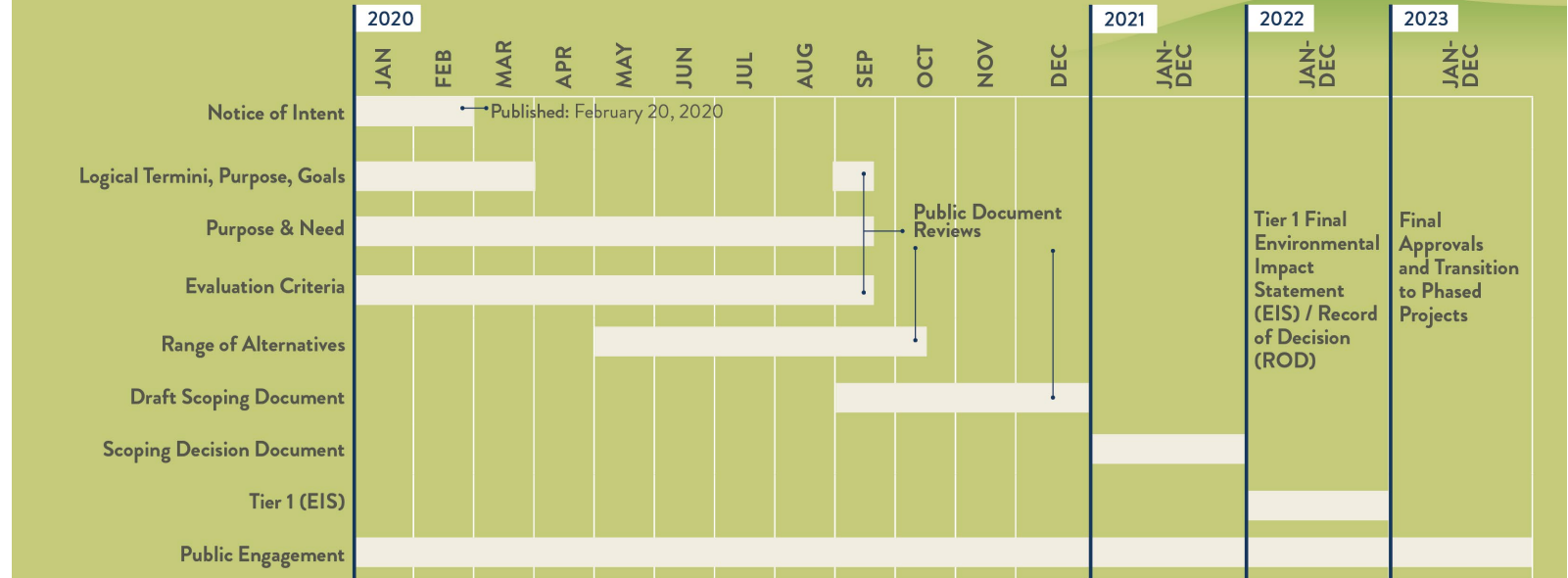
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Environmental Process



Schedule

RETHINKING I-94 PHASE 2



Phase 2 Schedule



FHWA and MnDOT are co-lead agencies

- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for all major Federal actions significantly affecting the human environment.
- The I-94 environmental document has FHWA in the role of the lead federal agency because this is a highway project.
- When a project involves both state impact thresholds and the need to prepare a federal EIS, coordination between the local road authority (in the case of Rethinking I-94 it is the Minnesota Department of Transportation [MnDOT]) and FHWA allows environmental review to be conducted as a single process that fulfills both state and federal requirements.

Environmental Process

Advantages

- Allows adequate time for robust engagement
- Focus on steps in corridor vision
- Facilitates phasing of projects in corridor
- Lower level streamlined Tier 2 documents
- Addresses corridor impact issues
 - An indirect and cumulative impacts analysis could be included in a Tier 1 study and then incorporated by reference in individual Tier 2 studies
- Lower level of design required
- May facilitate more cost sharing

Disadvantages

- Education on process
 - Not regarded as 'real' document
 - Pre-conceived notions from prior experience
- Permits do not get full clearance on specific design
- May draw out process
- Public & agency engagement must be more thoughtful
- Clearly define Tier 1 and Tier 2 objectives
- Parallel track options
- Not developing specific projects in Tier 1 area until ROD

NEPA & MEPA

- Designed to facilitate informed decision-making and environmental review.
- Combined process helps advance the timing of project process by streamlining redundancy in the two processes.

Rethinking I-94 EIS Tiering

- Tier 1 establishes a vision focused on transportation improvements and impact mitigation. It will determine:
 - Purpose and need
 - Social, Economic, and Environmental (SEE) impacts
 - Goals and livability
 - Alternatives analysis for the mainline (I-94 roadway) and access or interchange alternatives
 - Select preferred mainline alternative and access locations
 - Program of projects and priorities

Community Leaders Group

Community Leaders Group

- Provide community insight on communications and engagement strategies
- Provide community insight on corridor vision and implementation plan
- Identify potential issues and strategies to mitigate the impacts of Rethinking I-94 on residences and businesses
- Serve as an information resource and liaison to greater corridor community and organizations

Community Leaders Group

- Who else should be invited?

Next Meeting

- Environmental Process
 - Logical Termini
 - Purpose & Need
 - Evaluation Criteria