

# Public Involvement Plan

## ***Trunk Highway 8 Preliminary Design (from I-35 to Karmel Avenue) in Chisago County, MN***

*Draft #1.4*

**Chisago County**

Prepared by:



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SRF No. 12151

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# Introduction

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## Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan

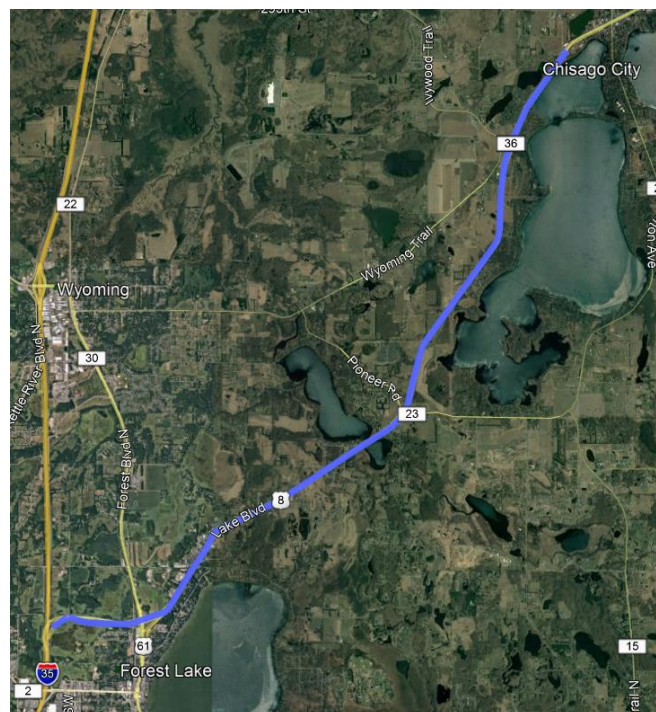
This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) has been developed to outline the planned involvement and outreach that will occur along with communication strategies recommended for this project.

The intent of public involvement for this project is to bring together project partners to inform, educate, and involve project area stakeholders - including landowners, businesses, other associated stakeholders, and the public regarding the proposed work along the Trunk Highway 8 (TH 8) preliminary design limits.

Public involvement can be a dynamic process; as such, this plan is considered a living document and will be updated to reflect input received from project partners, stakeholders, and the public as the project progresses.

## Project Overview

The goal of this project is to improve safety and mobility along TH 8 from I-35 to Karmel Ave. in Chisago County. To accomplish this, several alternatives will be evaluated including the potential of upgrading TH 8 to a 4-lane divided roadway. TH 8 is also in need of upgrading pedestrian curb ramps, cross walks, and adding a multi-use trail.



*Figure 1: Project Corridor, from I-35 to Karmel Avenue in Chisago City*

## Community Understanding

The project corridor includes three cities that will need to be involved in this project: Chisago City, Wyoming, and Forest Lake. However, the corridor also serves a broader group of jurisdictions beyond these cities as well. It will be important to involve other communities including Lindstrom, Stacy, and Center City along with others as needed during the project, as they have a vested interest in the corridor.

Project area demographics indicate:

- 92% white
- Approximately 2.5% Hispanic/Latino
- Less than 4% speak a language other than English
- County-wide, “low-income” residents make up about 5 percent of population

Research indicates key community cultural components include:

- Lake access
- Historic town centers
- Small-town culture
- Local history

There is likely a strong desire to preserve these traits with any potential changes to the roadway infrastructure.

Homeownership is relatively high in the communities within the project area at approximately 75%; the average commute time for working people is nearly half an hour. This data suggests that community members are invested long-term in their communities and likely use TH 8 on a regular basis.

It is also well understood that TH 8 serves other user types including: commuters passing through, vacationers, and business patrons. While it is difficult to estimate the proportion of traffic that is pass-through versus local, initial observations indicate that it is substantial, and varies by season.

## Goals and Objectives

Based upon initial project discussions and an analysis of corridor stakeholders, an “involve” engagement approach is recommended for this project. The overarching goal of the “involve” approach is to:

“Work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood<sup>1</sup>” by the project team of designers and planners. Broader goals of our approach are to:

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<sup>1</sup> IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

- Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure there is transparency and consistent communication of project information.
- Identify project champions among local stakeholders and the public, to gain local support.
- Identify project challengers early in the process and engage them in constructive dialogue.
- Connect with a varied cross section of stakeholders.
- Deploy defined communications and messaging strategy.

## Potential Stakeholders and Key Populations

The following have been identified as possible community partners/stakeholders to involve. This list is expected to grow as relationships are built and networks are leveraged.

| Directly Impacted  | Indirectly Impacted  | Agency Partners                |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Property owners, business owners, and property managers along the corridor | Area residents (Chisago City, Wyoming, Forest Lake, Lindstrom, Center City, Stacy)                 | Chisago County                 |
| Residents who live on the corridor   | Vacationers/Recreators (Lake home residents, lake recreation, snowmobiling, golf, Interstate Park) | Washington County              |
|  | Corridor Commuters   | MnDOT                          |
|  | Trucking and Freight Industry  | Police/Fire/EMT                |
|  | Institutions (Schools, Medical facilities, Religious congregations)                                | Forest Lake                    |
|  |  | Wyoming                        |
|  |  | Chisago City                   |
|  |  | Lindstrom, Center City, Shafer |
|  |  | Wyoming Chamber                |
|  |  | Chisago Lakes Chamber          |
|  |  | ABC Community <sup>2</sup>     |

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<sup>2</sup> National Civic Group made up of private business owners

## Public and Agency Involvement Strategy Overview

An overview of the Public and Agency Involvement Strategy identifies stakeholder groups and provides easy opportunities to educate the public and receive project feedback.

### Strategy 1: Consistent Communication

Community websites, newsletters, and other print, online and in-person communications will provide clear explanations of the project need, project timeline, and project impacts. Consistent updates and opportunities for feedback will be used to keep the public informed and identify concerns and issues from an early point in the project.

Community Websites and Newsletters include:

- <https://www.wyomingmn.org/>
- <https://www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us/>
- <https://www.ci.chisago.mn.us/>
- Chisago City newsletter “Town Topics”
- <http://www.cityoflindstrom.us/>
- City of Lindstrom Newsletter

### Strategy 2: Tailored Involvement

Tailored involvement is necessary to connect with project stakeholder groups using methods and locations most comfortable for them. A full evaluation of online and in-person engagement tools is provided in the following pages. A robust suite of engagement tools is necessary to connect to a cross section of the community and identify blind spots. For example, property owners use the corridor differently than commuters, thus there should be different approaches to engaging them. SRF will work with the Project Management Team to confirm stakeholder groups and associated strategies for connecting with them.

### Strategy 3: Coordination with Project Management and Advisory Groups

This project includes four advisory bodies comprised of staff from various government agencies: Project Management Team, Technical Advisory Committee, Local Advisory Team, and Permitting Agencies (CLFLWD, DNR, ACOE, MPCA). There will also be coordination with and updates provided to the TH 8 Task Force. This group meets quarterly at Lindstrom City Hall. The next meeting is May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 7pm. Clear meeting schedules and consistent communications will be critical to keep everyone informed and gather guidance at important points in the project.

# Agency Involvement Approach

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Governmental agencies within the project area and those with oversight of the TH 8 corridor will be involved in the project throughout the entire process. Who/When/How to involve these agencies is critical to managing the project successfully. Varying levels of involvement is necessary to gather input and share information at key milestones throughout the project timeline. We intend to employ different stakeholder group combinations through the process to manage the work as it progresses. The following sections provide an overview of the current understanding of who/when/how agency stakeholders will be involved, including expectations for each group.

## Project Management Team

The Project Management Team (PMT) is the decision-making body for the project. There will be up to 12 PMT meetings. PMT members will review the Public Involvement Plan and provide guidance regarding locations and approach for how public involvement takes place. PMT members will also participate in public and business meetings as needed. SRF staff will provide meeting agendas and minutes and will facilitate these meetings.

The PMT will consist of representatives from the following agencies:

- Chisago County
- MnDOT
- Washington County

## Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will meet up to 3 times to address technical aspects of the project. SRF will facilitate TAC meetings and provide agendas and meeting minutes. Technical staff representatives from jurisdictional agencies will meet to inform study assumptions, methodologies, review technical materials, and provide guidance regarding subject matter relative to their area of expertise. This group will not meet on a regular basis and may not have consistent representation. Members may include:

- PMT members
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Determine how they will be involved
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) – representatives from State Aid, Traffic, Water Resources Engineering (WRE), Office of Environmental Services (EOS), and Geometrics

## Local Advisory Team

It is recommended that a series of up to five Local Advisory Team (LAT) meetings be held with community leaders to identify local issues and address stakeholder concerns. The LAT is an expansion of the PMT.

Three of these meetings will be individualized to address targeted issues in each of the three corridor cities.

- Individual meeting with Chisago City, Forest Lake, and Wyoming planning and engineering staff. County currently has regular meetings with these Cities.
- Group meeting with representatives from all three cities and adjacent cities

SRF will coordinate and attend each meeting. SRF will also provide meeting materials and coordinate meeting logistics.

Other LAT meetings may include a subset group of city engineers, planners, transportation and community development representatives from:

- City of Lindstrom
- City of Shafer
- Chisago Lakes Township
- Center City

# Communications Plan

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## Overview

The Communications Plan presented here supports the overall engagement vision of informing the public and stakeholders. The Communications Plan is a living document that provides a road map for rolling out the announcement of the project, informing the public and stakeholders about involvement opportunities, announcing events, and interacting with media outlets.

## Key Messaging Areas

Communicate with the public on the following topics:

- Project need
- Media campaign to demonstrate project momentum: “this project is happening!”
- Project status, schedule, and other housekeeping items
- Design intent/goals & objectives
- Anticipated right of way impacts, if any
- Assessments from local governments
- Process (RW acquisition, final design, construction)
- Construction staging and traffic control

### 1. Public Communications

To ensure impactful, cost-effective, and swift dissemination of information, the team will use the existing communication tools of MnDOT and Chisago County, with potential support from corridor cities including Forest Lake, Wyoming and Chisago City. Communications tools may include community websites, newsletters, utility bills, social media platforms and bulletin boards. This is an easy and low-cost way to reach an established audience. SRF will work with communications staff from each of the partner agencies to provide project updates and information, which can be used as needed.

In addition, community partners have their own communication outlets. Leveraging relationships with community organizations to spread the word to their members, clients, and audience is another low-cost, minimal-effort opportunity to reach the public. Recruiting community organizations to serve as project communicators and partners provides the added benefit of building trust and respect in the community.

It is assumed that Chisago County communications staff will support SRF in disseminating information and working with media outlets.

## 2. Earned Media

At certain points in the project, especially prior to public events, the project team should reach out to local media outlets to earn free media coverage. Often, local media are happy to provide coverage of public events. It is assumed that Chisago County will produce a press release prior to each large public event for project partners to share.

### Local media outlets

| Outlet                          | Type                |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Chisago County Press            | Newspaper/Website   |
| Chisago City Website            | Municipal           |
| Wyoming Website/Newsletters     | Municipal           |
| Forest Lake Website/Newsletters | Municipal           |
| Lindstrom Website/Newsletters   | Municipal           |
| Washington County Website       | County              |
| Chisago County Website          | County              |
| KSTP, WCCO                      | Regional Television |
| Star Tribune                    | Newspaper/Website   |
| Pioneer Press/TwinCities.com    | Newspaper/Website   |
| Forest Lake Times               | Newspaper/Website   |
| Facebook, Twitter, Instagram    | Social Media        |

## 3. Social Media

Chisago County, Washington County, MnDOT, Forest Lake, Wyoming and Chisago City may already have established audiences through their social media channels. Using these outlets (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) will help share timely information and increase awareness about the project with local and regional audiences.

SRF will assist PMT staff in creating social media content to share key messages, promote upcoming engagement events, and direct users to the website for additional information about the project. Social media content will include a balance of graphics and text, making it easy to understand and visually appealing.



*Figure 5: An example of a fun Facebook promotion for a recent Open House.*

# Public Involvement Approach

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## Outreach Methodology and Tools

This section provides a description of the methods and tools used to involve the public in this project. Tools will be used in tailored ways to ensure that a wide variety of community members and stakeholders are able to connect with this project process.

### 1. Adjacent Property Owner Meetings

Up to 10 adjacent property owner meetings will be held during the project. These meetings will be held to learn the concerns and hopes of local property owners regarding the project, ensure project questions are answered, and to keep property owners in the loop as the project progresses. These meetings will typically involve properties that may be directly impacted by the project, and meeting attendees will be finalized in consultation with the PMT. Initial property owner meetings will be conducted one-on-one as needed, and the Chisago Lakes Chamber may be engaged to connect with local businesses. SRF staff will coordinate meetings and provide agendas and meeting minutes.

### 2. Pop Up Engagement

The purpose of pop-up engagement is to connect with people in places they are already visiting. Short, easy questions allow people to engage with the project for any amount of time. Because this is a corridor where users stop at a variety of locations, pop-ups are a recommended primary engagement technique.

Locations for potential pop-ups include public places such as government buildings, community centers, supermarkets, cafes, etc. Materials from in-person events may need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of these engagement opportunities, including alterations to engagement activities and clarification of project information.



*Figure 2: Pop-Up engagement at a community center*

### **Potential Pop-Up Locations**

| <b>Pop Up Location</b>                        | <b>Target Population</b>                 | <b>Community</b>          | <b>Timing</b>    |
|---|--|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Kinder Corner Childcare</b>                | Commuting Parents                        | Forest Lake               | May 2019         |
| <b>Birchwood Senior Living</b>                | Seniors                                  | Forest Lake               | June/July 2019   |
| <b>Chisago City Farmer's Market</b>           | Community members                        | Chisago City, Moberg Park | May - August     |
| <b>Mike's Bait on 8/Holiday Station Store</b> | Vacationers/Local Community              | Forest Lake/Chisago City  | June/July 2019   |
| <b>Ki-Chi-Saga Days</b>                       | Local Community, Vacationers, Businesses | Chisago City              | August 15-18     |
| <b>Karl Oscar Days</b>                        | Local Community                          | Lindstrom                 | July 10-14       |
| <b>Stagecoach Days</b>                        | Local Community                          | Wyoming                   | September 13-15  |
| <b>Arts in the Park</b>                       | Local community                          | Forest Lake               | June/July/August |
| <b>Lakeside Elementary School</b>             | Parents                                  | Chisago City              | October 2019     |

### **3. Community Open House**

It is recommended that up to two (2) public open house meetings are held. A total of 5 were originally planned but some may be converted to pop-ups. The two public open houses will be held at key points to allow the community an opportunity to identify issues, discuss project materials with project team members, provide feedback, and review preliminary design.



*Figure 3: Open House discussion with project team members*

The first open house will be held in a location along the north portion of the project extent. This open house will allow the project team an opportunity to introduce the project to the local and regional community, obtain the community input on existing issues, and better understand major concerns and top priorities. The information gathered at the first open house will be processed and there will be a report summarizing key points of feedback.

The second open house will be held in a location along the southern portion of the project extent. At this open house the project team will present concept plans with incorporated public input, inform community members about next steps, and provide space for conversation, questions, and concerns.

Efforts will be made to hold the open house meetings directly on the corridor to provide a convenient and visible meeting location for the public.

SRF will attend each meeting and will provide meeting materials, and take minutes. SRF will also prepare newsletters and mailers and will take the lead in advertising and the preparation of mailing lists and coordinating meeting logistics. PMT will attend as agency representatives to help answer questions, etc.

A postcard mailing should be prepared prior to two community workshops to raise awareness of the project and invite community members to participate in the workshops and/or visit the project website. SRF will rely on County staff to provide a mailing list for all addresses in Chisago City, Wyoming, and Forest Lake.

#### **4. Website and Online Engagement**

Chisago County will host and maintain the project website, with content updates provided by SRF. The website will serve as a repository for the project overview, project schedule, upcoming public

engagement opportunities, related maps or graphics, and project updates. Materials viewed and distributed at any in-person engagement activity will also be available on the website.

Online engagement activities are impactful ways to find deep connections with community members. These opportunities will augment other in-person activities, and provide the best opportunity to provide specific comments. Online engagement tools will include:

- **Arc StoryMap.** This interactive StoryMap format will describe the project corridor, identify issues and community concerns that the project addresses, and educate the community on key considerations and problem points along the corridor. See an example from the [Rush Line BRT Public Engagement](#).
- **Project Survey.** Up to two (2) project surveys will be developed to get public feedback on issues and concerns along the project extent. Surveys will be clearly advisory and will ensure there is no suggestion that the public is “voting” on concepts or options. Surveys will be rolled out in connection with pop-up activities and the open houses.
- **Project Wikimap.** The wikimap will provide a platform for the public to interact with the project extent and provide feedback about issues, concerns, and ideas along the corridor.

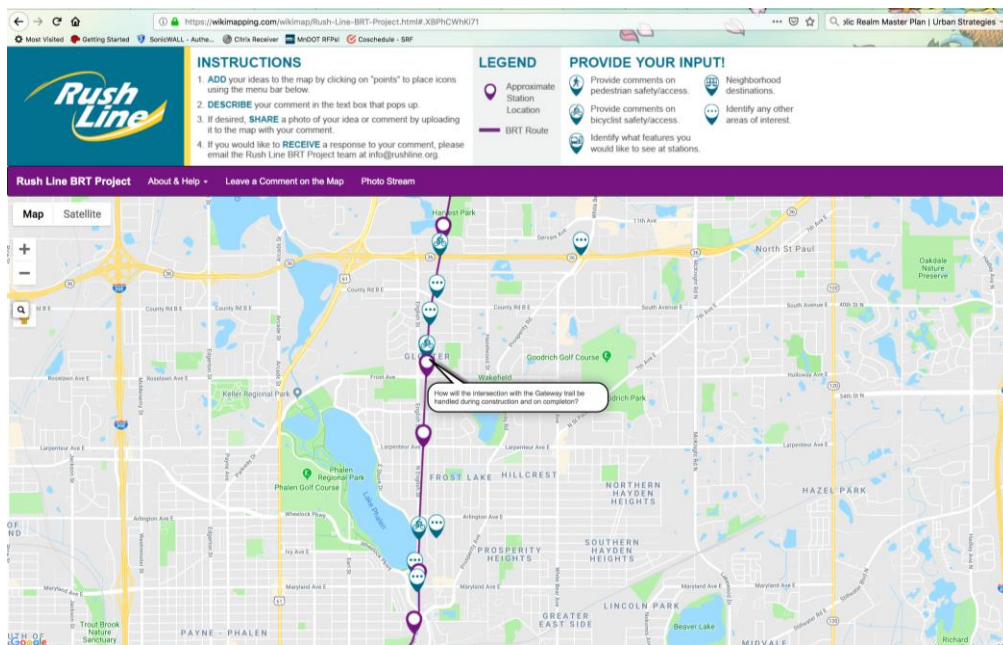


Figure 4: Wikimap example

## Agency and Public Involvement Timeline

|                   | 2019 |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | 2020 |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
|-------------------|------|-------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
|                   | Mar  | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar  | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct |  |  |
| PMT (12)          | X    | X     | X   | X    | X    | X   | X   | X   | X   | X   |     | X   |      | X     |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
| TAC (3)           |      |       |     | X    |      |     | X   |     |     | X   |     |     |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
| LAT (5)           |      |       | X   | X    | X    | X   |     |     | X   |     |     |     |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
| Task Force (TH 8) |      |       | Λ   |      |      |     | Λ   |     |     | Λ   |     |     |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
| Pop Ups           |      |       |     | X    | X    | X   |     | X   |     |     |     |     |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
| Open House        |      |       |     |      |      |     | X   |     |     | X   |     |     |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |
| Online Engagement |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |       |     |      |      |     |     |     |  |  |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| In Person Meeting     | X |
| Online Tools          |   |
| Providing Information | Λ |

# Overall Timeline and Process (Detail)

## Detailed Public Involvement and Communications Plan

**\*Note: This document will be updated and amended as needed as project moves forward**

| PHASE 1 – UNDERSTANDING (Approximately March – September 2019)   |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data collection and existing conditions review analysis</li> <li>2. Prepare key messaging</li> <li>3. Project announcement rollout</li> <li>4. Establish communications protocol with City, County, and State engagement staff</li> <li>5. Engagement to confirm project need</li> </ol> |   |  |   |  |
| Timeframe  | Strategy  | Purpose & Outcome  | Target Audience                                     | Responsible Party                                  |
| March 2019   | Project Management Team Kick-off Meeting  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce project</li> <li>• Define goals &amp; objectives</li> <li>• Review PIP</li> </ul>                                     | Internal  | PMT  |
| April 2019   | Finalize Public Involvement Plan<br>PMT #2  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize with any feedback from PMT</li> </ul>  | Primary: Internal<br>Secondary: General public      | SRF, PMT   |
| May 2019   | PMT #3  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>  | Internal  | PMT  |
| May, 20 2019   | Connect with TH 8 Task Force Group, 7pm at Lindstrom City Hall                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn more about Task Force interest in project, connect on pertinent dates and tasks</li> </ul>                                | Task Force membership                               | Chisago County with support from SRF as needed     |
| May 2019   | Communications Rollout (press release, social media announcement, website, Facebook advertisements) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announce project to community</li> <li>• Build understanding that project is happening</li> <li>• Kickoff engagement</li> </ul> | General Public, Business Owners, other Stakeholders | SRF, in coordination with Chisago County and MnDOT |
| May 2019   | PMT #4  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>  | Internal  | PMT  |

| June 2019                        | Local Advisory Team (LAT) Meetings #1, #2, #3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation and Community Development Staff</li> </ul> | Chisago City Staff<br>Forest Lake Staff<br>Wyoming Staff | SRF, Chisago County, MnDOT |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| June 2019                        | PMT #5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>  | Internal   | PMT                        |
| July 2019                        | PMT #6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>  | Internal   | PMT                        |
| Phase 1 Important Dates          |   |  |  |                            |
| Strategy                         |   | Date   |  | Status                     |
| Public Communications Plan Final |   | March TBD  |  | Draft developed            |
| Communications Roll Out          |   | May TBD  |  |                            |

**PHASE 2 – ENGAGE AND INFORM (Approximately October 2019 – March 2020)**

1. Prepare and review concepts
2. Engage businesses, affected residents
3. Select preferred alternative using data and community input

| Timeframe     | Strategy              | Purpose & Outcome   | Target Audience                                      | Responsible Party          |
|---------------|-----------------------|---|--|----------------------------|
| July 2019     | Survey #1 and Wikimap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues and concerns identification</li> <li>Educate on project need</li> </ul>   | General public                                       | SRF                        |
| June-Sep 2019 | Pop-Up Workshops #1-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage community on issues and concerns along TH 8 corridor</li> <li>Introduce project scope and need</li> </ul>   | Primary: Public, Business owners                     | SRF, County                |
| Aug 2019      | PMT #7                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>   | Internal   | PMT                        |
| Sep 2019      | PMT #8                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>   | Internal   | PMT                        |
| Sep 2019      | Arc StoryMap          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate StoryMap to explain work to date and project need</li> </ul>  | General Public                                       | SRF, Chisago County, MnDOT |
| July 2019     | Open House #1         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform regarding project need</li> <li>Report out first round of engagement, ask for additional feedback</li> </ul>  | Primary: Public, Business owners                     |                            |
| Oct 2019      | PMT #9                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>   | Internal   | PMT                        |
| Dec 2019      | Open House #2         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform Public of Preferred Alternative and Alternatives Analysis</li> <li>Provide information on timeline</li> <li>Allow opportunities for questions and comments</li> </ul> | Primary: Public, Business owners, other stakeholders | SRF                        |

|                         |  |  |  |                     |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------|
| October 2019            | Initiate adjacent property owner meetings (up to 10 total) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate project intent</li> </ul> | Property owners identified by PMT along project corridor | Chisago County, SRF |
| Phase 2 Important Dates |  |  |  |                     |
| Strategy                |  | Date   | Status   |                     |
| Open House #1           |  | September TBD  |  |                     |

|   |   |  |  |                     |
|---|---|--|--|---------------------|
| PHASE 3 – MUNICIPAL CONSENT (Approximately March – August 2020) |   |  |  |                     |
| 1. Present to corridor cities                                   |   |  |  |                     |
| Timeframe   | Strategy                                | Purpose & Outcome  | Target Audience  | Responsible Party   |
| July 2020   | City Council Hearings Municipal Consent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present to Council</li> </ul> | Primary : Forest Lake, Chisago City, Wyoming City Councils | SRF, Chisago County |
| Phase 3 Important Dates   |   |  |  |                     |
| Strategy  |   | Date   | Status   |                     |
|   |   |  |  |                     |