



**NORTHERN  
ROCHESTER  
TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

**Technical Memorandum No. 1  
Project Framework  
Approved May 14, 2009**

**INTRODUCTION**

The City of Rochester and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) District 6 have initiated the Northern Rochester Transportation Study. The study is focused on an area bound by 75th Street NW on the north, 55th Street NW on the south, 50th Avenue NW on the west, and 18th Avenue NW on the east.

To provide some historical perspective, it is important to note this study is a follow-up to a transportation study conducted in 2005-2006, which focused on a similar area. The 2005-2006 study, also named the Northern Rochester Transportation Study, was aimed at identifying issues and needs within the 55th Street NW interchange area and the 65th Street NW growth area in order to develop appropriate transportation improvements to address these needs. This included evaluating alternatives to modify the existing 55th Street NW interchange, add new interchange access to TH 52 at 65th Street NW, and consider other local roadway connectivity improvements in this area such as frontage/backage roads. Although the 2005-2006 Northern Rochester Transportation Study involved an extensive alternative evaluation process and traffic operations analysis, it was never formally completed nor were any final recommendations made.

Due to continued growth within the northern Rochester area and specific development pressure within the 65th Street NW/TH 52 vicinity, the City of Rochester and Mn/DOT District 6 have agreed there is a need to develop a long-term transportation plan for the study area. Since a long-term plan was not developed as part of the previous study and since several years have passed, the current Northern Rochester Transportation Study will not be a continuation of the previous effort, but will look to start fresh on the process with a united goal to achieve consensus on the ultimate roadway plan for this area. The overall goal of this effort is to develop a unified transportation improvement plan for the designated study area that can be implemented over time. The plan must have an adequate level of design, engineering, and environmental documentation as well as be consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. This will enable local officials to guide future land use and local infrastructure improvements as well as garner support for the adoption of official maps.

**PURPOSE OF PROJECT FRAMEWORK MEMORANDUM**

The purpose of this technical memorandum is to introduce the following elements, which collectively comprise the overall framework for this study:

1. Key Study Tasks and Schedule (Figure 1)
2. Study Goals and Objectives
3. Study Partner Roles (Table 1)
4. Decision-Making Process (Table 2)
5. Public Involvement Plan

(Note: Tables are in the Appendix at the end of the memorandum)

## **KEY STUDY TASKS AND SCHEDULE**

The Northern Rochester Transportation Study will consist of three phases. Each of these phases, along with the key tasks comprising each phase are described below and shown in Figure 1 in the Appendix.

1. Phase One includes the development and evaluation of alternatives and will culminate with the identification of a preferred alternative (see Figure 2 in the Appendix). Key tasks within this phase include:
  - a. *Task 2: Project Framework*– Set the overall study framework including establishing or confirming high-level goals and objectives, establishing a Project Management Team (PMT), developing a decision-making process for the study, and preparing a public involvement plan. This task results in the development of Technical Memorandum No. 1 summarizing the project framework.
  - b. *Task 3: Data Collection* – Assemble relevant background information necessary to identify community, transportation, social, economic and environmental issues and constraints within the study area. This task results in the development of Technical Memorandum No. 2 summarizing relevant background data for the study area.
  - c. *Task 4: Analyze Data, Confirm Issues, Problems and Needs* – Identify and summarize key elements including community goals/consistency with plans, transportation system deficiencies, safety issues, as well as significant social, economic, and environmental issues in the study area and organize identified deficiencies into a preliminary purpose and need statement. This task results in the development of Technical Memorandum No. 3 summarizing forecast model parameters (operating speeds, number of lanes, etc.), along with key findings from the traffic analysis and safety analysis.
  - d. *Task 5: Identify Initial Concepts* – Identify system alternatives (concept level) and based upon stakeholder input and technical analysis, use a set of measurable screening criteria to conduct a “feasibility” analysis of each alternative. This task results in the development of Technical Memorandum No. 4 summarizing the screening criteria and identification of concept alternatives.
  - e. *Task 6: Concept Development and Evaluation* – Develop retained concept alternatives further by identifying project design standards such as design speed,

number of lanes, access spacing, etc. Evaluate alternatives based upon their ability to meet project purpose and need and document the rationale for the recommended preferred alternative. This task will result in the development of two technical memorandums. Technical Memorandum No. 5 will summarize the design, right of way impacts, planning level cost estimates, concept traffic operations analysis, benefit/cost analysis, and the overall alternative evaluation process. Technical Memorandum No. 6 will be developed to document Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) reports and to identify the specific intersection controls to be incorporated into the layout of the Preferred Alternative.

2. Phase Two includes the environmental review and approval process and the development of a final geometric layout for the preferred alternative (see Figure 3 in the Appendix). Key tasks within this phase include:

- a. *Task 7: Environmental Documentation* – Identify and complete the necessary environmental documentation required to meet NEPA requirements for this project. It is assumed that an environmental assessment/environmental assessment worksheet (EA/EAW) will be required. This task will result in the development of three technical memorandums. Technical Memorandum No.7 will summarize the noise analysis for the EA/EAW. Technical Memorandum No. 8 will summarize the methodology, assumptions, calculations and results of the Benefit Cost Analysis. Technical Memorandum No. 9 will summarize the responses to a typical Interchange Access Modification Request.
- b. *Task 8: Design Memorandum* – Prepare a design memorandum to document the project design standards and any design exceptions being requested.
- c. *Task 9: Staff Approved Layout* – Develop a geometric layout including roadway profiles, cross sections, preliminary construction limits as well as right of way and easement needs for the preferred alternative for Mn/DOT Central Office approval.
- d. *Task 10: Preliminary Water Resources Engineering* – Develop a project drainage layout for the preferred alternative using water quality and quantity BMPs, roadway layout, profiles and staging plans. This task will result in the development of Technical Memorandum No. 10 documenting the preliminary water resource engineering design process and resolution of issues for the preferred alternative.
- e. *Task 11: Cost Estimate* – Prepare an estimate of construction and right of way cost estimates based upon the geometric layout submitted for staff approval. Facilitate cost participation discussions to identify agency responsibilities.

3. Phase Three will consist of the identification of phasing opportunities and priorities and official mapping (see Figure 3 in the Appendix). Key tasks within this phase include:

- a. *Task 12: Phased Improvements* – Review preferred alternative for phased implementation opportunities to identify short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions. This task will result in the development of Technical Memorandum No. 11 containing recommendations on phasing the overall improvements.
- b. *Task 13: Official Map* – Prepare an official map(s) for the preferred alternative to preserve future right of way needs and controlled access locations.

Public and agency involvement is also a key part of this study. This will be implemented throughout the study process and will be ongoing as documented in the public involvement plan described later in this memorandum..

## **STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The following goals and objectives were established early in the study process to guide the development of the overall system plan, including the development and evaluation of alternatives. These goals/objectives may be refined at later stages in the study to better correlate with alternative screening/evaluation criteria.

*Study Goal:* Develop a unified long-term transportation improvement plan that defines the study area's future transportation system, including the arterial and collector roadway networks and their associated access, including new access to TH 52. The focus of this system plan will be to:

- Improve long-term system mobility, continuity, and connectivity
- Preserve important transportation corridors
- Guide future growth and development
- Improve coordination between jurisdictions
- Provide for reasonable local traffic circulation and access

### *Study Objectives:*

1. Address existing and future operational and safety issues
2. Promote transportation system efficiency
3. Minimize long-term operational impacts to TH 52
4. Equitably distribute traffic to arterials, collectors and local roadways based upon their intended functions
5. Provide a supporting arterial network that serves future land uses
6. Balance right of way and other social, economic and environmental impacts to the area
7. Minimize long-term public costs for transportation infrastructure by maximizing existing and phased improvement investments to be consistent with long-range recommendations

## **STUDY PARTNER ROLES**

To ensure that alternatives accommodate a wide variety of interests and consider a range of options, the process will be inclusive of members of transportation agencies, elected officials, resource agencies and the general public and will be overseen by a Project Management Team (PMT). The PMT's involvement in the project is significant, as it will provide guidance at key

decision points as the primary decision making group for the project, determine project direction, and guide the public involvement process and decision-making framework.

The PMT consists of representatives from the City of Rochester and Mn/DOT District 6. SRF Consulting Group, Inc. (SRF) will also be attending all PMT meetings to serve as a moderator/mediator to the PMT in order to ensure adequate information is provided to make informed decisions in a timely and efficient manner. The PMT will be involved continuously throughout the project, and will generally meet monthly/bi-monthly.

The PMT will be supported by the following Project Partners: Olmsted County, Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and additional staff from the City of Rochester, Mn/DOT, and SRF. Project Partners will be included in PMT meetings, as determined by the PMT, to provide input on technical issues and to ensure coordination between the agencies. Therefore, the role of the Project Partners is key in terms of the overall study process; however, the PMT will be the only decision making body for the study.

Table 1 provides more information on the composition of the PMT and Project Partners as well as their specific roles and responsibilities during the study.

### **DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

The PMT will be the main decision making body for this study. However, input/feedback and recommendations from Project Partners and the general public will also be considered through this process. Table 2 identifies the decision documents that will be developed for each task of the study, and who will be responsible making recommendations and approving these documents.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

Public involvement is critical for the successful implementation of any plan or project. Successful public involvement involves fostering cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders to develop common goals and objectives, to develop solutions that accomplish stated goals, and to develop consensus about the eventual outcome. To foster successful and meaningful public involvement, a public involvement plan was developed to guide the planning process. This plan was prepared to be flexible enough to respond to changing conditions and can be adjusted as issues arise. The proposed public involvement plan is tailored to include a wide range of stakeholders, including agency staff and other interested parties within the general public including but not limited to: elected officials, business owners, local interest groups, and local residents. Figure 1 (Study Schedule) also provides information on the anticipated timing of these involvement opportunities during the study process.

### *Public Involvement Techniques*

Public involvement techniques, such as public open houses and electronic communications are proposed to accommodate different stakeholder groups and project tasks. Noted below is a summary of some of these methods and techniques.

- **Public Meetings/Public Hearings**

Two public information meetings will be held at critical study milestones. These meetings will include a wide range of stakeholders, including local residents, businesses owners, elected officials, local interest groups, and interested agencies. The objective of the first public information meeting is to introduce the study, discuss the study schedule and gain input/feedback on study goals, issues, and needs. The second public information meeting is scheduled to occur near the end of Phase I of the study to gather input/feedback on the preferred alternative.

In addition to the two public information meetings, a public hearing will be held during the environmental review process, to obtain input concerning the Environmental Assessment (EA) / Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the preferred alternative. A public hearing will also be held during the Official Mapping process.

- **Study Website**

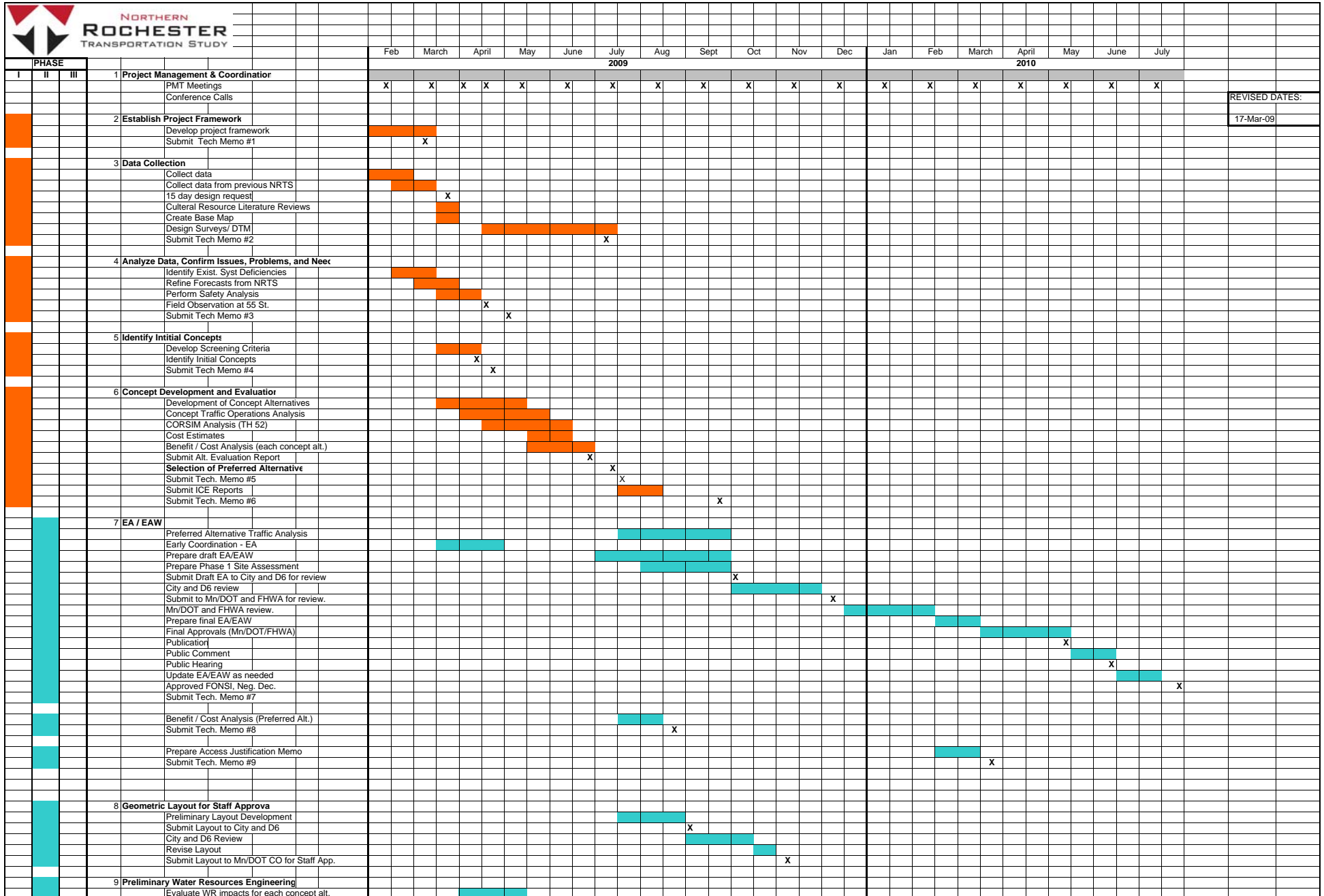
A study website will be established to communicate information on the study progress and schedule as well as key study materials (i.e., technical memorandums, etc.) to be updated at critical study milestones. The website will also be used to notify people of upcoming public information meetings.

### **PMT APPROVAL OF PROJECT FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS**

The draft Project Framework elements were presented to the PMT in March and April 2009 for discussion, comment and revision. Based on this input, the final Project Framework was prepared, reviewed and approved by the PMT on May 14, 2009.

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# APPENDIX



REVISED DATES:  
17-Mar-09

Figure 1





# Project Decision Flowchart:

## Phase I – Identification of the Preferred Alternative

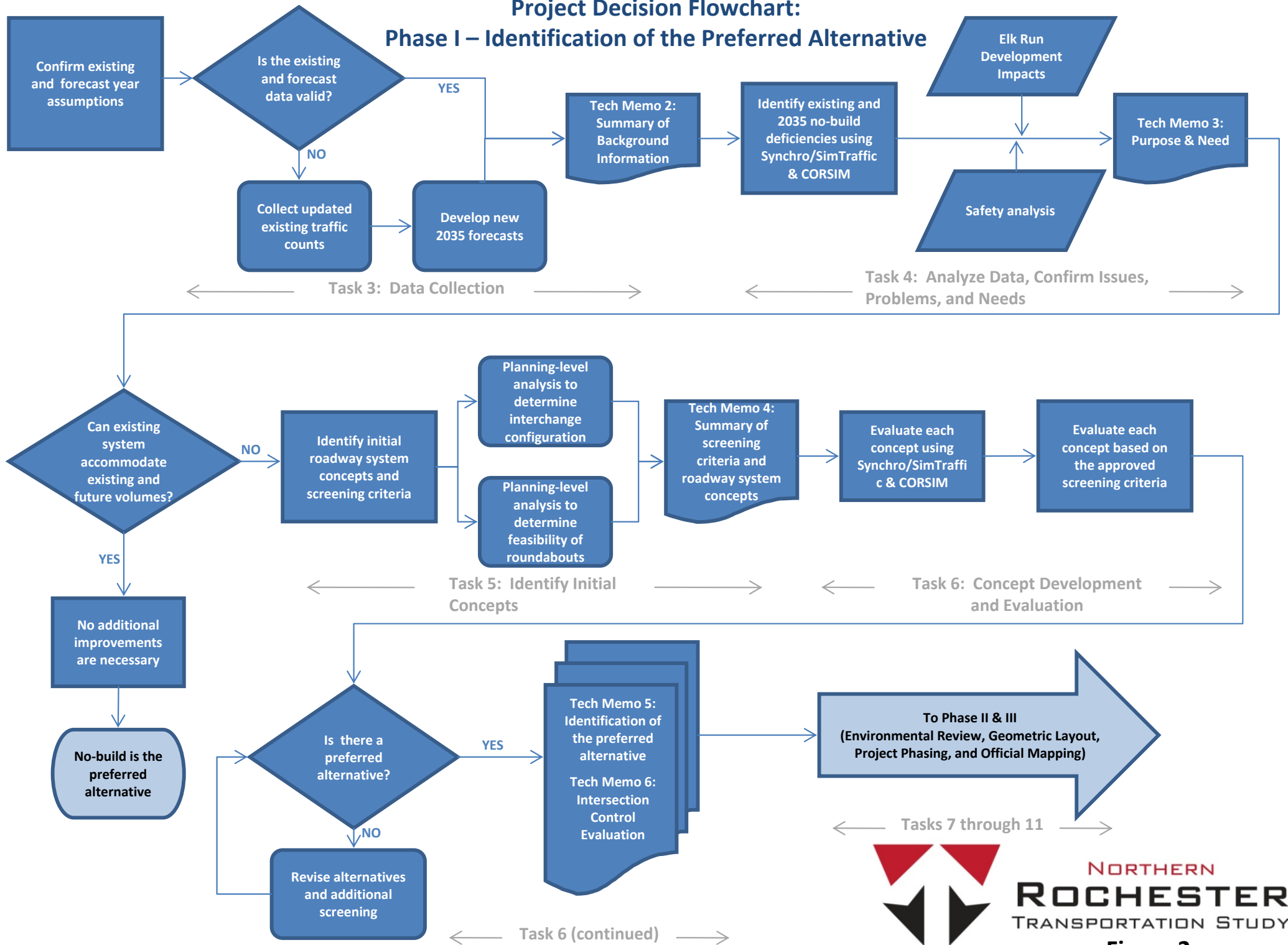
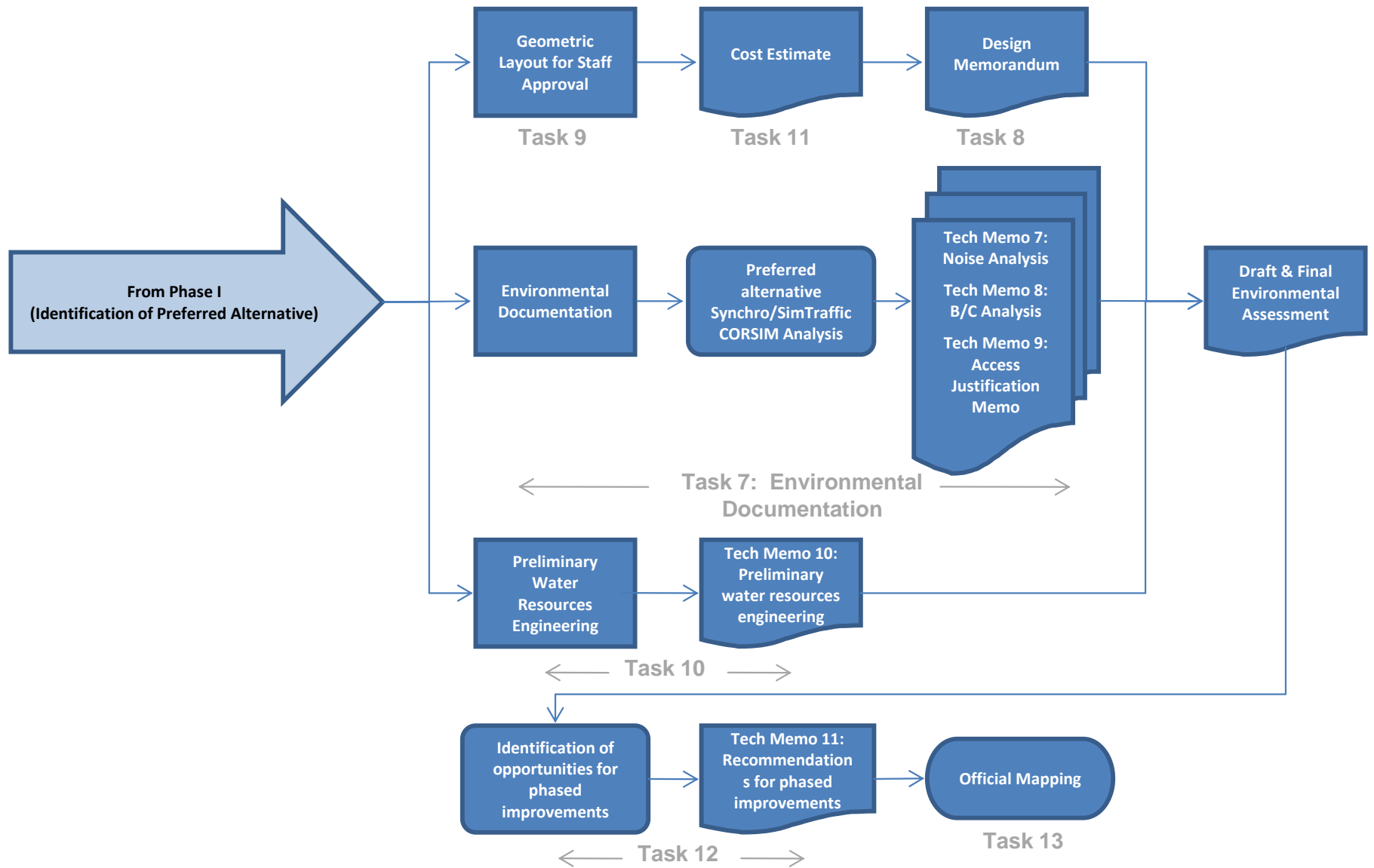


Figure 2

# Project Decision Flowchart: Phase II & III – Environmental Review, Geometric Layout, Project Phasing and Official Mapping



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**Figure 3**

**TABLE 1:  
STUDY PARTNERS ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES DURING STUDY PROCESS**

	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Roles</b>	<b>Number of Meetings</b>
<b>Project Management Team (PMT)</b>	<p>Mn/DOT District 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rhonda Prestegard</li> </ul> <p>City of Rochester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Richard Freese</li> </ul> <p>SRF Consulting Group, Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ken Holte</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary decision making body for the study</li> <li>▪ Provide strategic direction and guide study process</li> <li>▪ Define study goals and objectives</li> <li>▪ Develop public involvement plan</li> <li>▪ Monitor work plan and schedule</li> <li>▪ Implement decision making framework</li> <li>▪ Digest input, participate in technical analysis</li> <li>▪ Develop and evaluate alternatives</li> <li>▪ Prepare study recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide and review data</li> <li>▪ Seek and consider input from Project Partners and the public during the study process</li> <li>▪ Identify system deficiencies</li> <li>▪ Establish need element for NEPA Purpose and Need Statement</li> <li>▪ Prepare study goals, objectives, screening criteria, design parameters, etc.</li> <li>▪ Participate in preparation and approval of key study products (examples – technical memorandums, state/federal documents [EA])</li> <li>▪ Recommend preferred alternative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly over the course of the study as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Partners</b>	<p>Olmsted County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michael Sheehan</li> <li>▪ Kaye Bieniek</li> </ul> <p>Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Charlie Reiter</li> </ul> <p>Federal Highway Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kevin Kleithermes</li> </ul> <p>*Additional City of Rochester, Mn/DOT, and SRF Consulting Group staff will also be included as Project Partners and will participate in PMT meetings as needed, to be determined by each of their respective agencies represented on the PMT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and provide input on (and in some instances assist in the development of) the technical analysis.</li> <li>▪ Provide recommendations to the PMT as requested.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide input and feedback on study products/technical analysis as needed -determined by the PMT</li> <li>▪ Participate in preparation and approval of key study products, as directed by the PMT</li> <li>▪ Provide input on the selection of a preferred alternative, as directed by the PMT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance at monthly PMT meetings to be determined by the PMT.</li> </ul>
<b>General Public</b>	All interested persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate at open houses and public hearings</li> <li>▪ Remain informed of study process, events, milestones and products by monitoring project website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in the transportation planning process by providing comments at open houses held at critical study milestones, input will be documented and provided to the PMT</li> <li>▪ Participate in environmental review process by providing input at EA/EAW hearing, comments will be recorded for agency consideration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two public information meetings to be held during Phase One (issues identification, selection of preferred alternative)</li> <li>▪ Public hearings to be held during the EA/EAW public comment period and during the Official Map process.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 2:  
STUDY DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

Task	Decision Documents	Participants*	
		Recommenders	Approvers
Task 1: Project Management	N/A	N/A	N/A
Task 2: Project Framework	Technical Memorandum No. 1 (Project Framework)	PMT	PMT
Task 3: Data Collection	Technical Memorandum No. 2 (Project Background)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
Task 4: Analyze Data, Confirm Issues, Problems and Needs	Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Technical Memorandum No. 3 (Traffic Forecast Parameters, Traffic Analysis, and Safety Analysis)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
Task 5: Identify Initial Concepts	Technical Memorandum No. 4 (Screening Criteria and Initial Concept Alternatives)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
Task 6: Concept Development and Evaluation	Technical Memorandum No. 5 (Concept Design Development – Design, ROW, Planning-Level Costs)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Re-submit Technical Memorandum No. 5 (Concept Design Development – Traffic Operations)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Re-submit Technical Memorandum No. 5 (Concept Design Development – Traffic Operations of TH 52)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Re-submit Technical Memorandum No. 5 (Concept Design Development – Benefit/Cost Analysis)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Re-submit Technical Memorandum No. 5 (Concept Design Development – Alternative Evaluation/Selection of Preferred Alternative)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Technical Memorandum No. 6 (ICE Reports Overview and Recommended Intersection Controls for Preferred Alternative)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
Task 7: Environmental Assessment/Environmental Worksheet	Technical Memorandum No. 7 (Noise Analysis)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Technical Memorandum No. 8 (Benefit/Cost Analysis of Preferred Alternative)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Technical Memorandum No. 9 (Responses to Interchange Access Modification Request Questions)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
	Environmental Assessment/Environmental Assessment Worksheet	PMT and Project Partners	PMT, Mn/DOT Central Office, Rochester City Council, and FHWA
Task 8: Design Memorandum	Design Memorandum	PMT and Project Partners	PMT, Mn/DOT Central Office and FHWA
Task 9: Geometric Layout for Staff Approval	Level 1 Geometric Layout and Profiles	PMT and Project Partners	PMT, Mn/DOT Central Office, Rochester City Council
Task 10: Preliminary Water Resource Engineering	Technical Memorandum No. 10 (Water Resources Engineering Design Process)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT

Task 11: Cost Estimate	Construction Cost Estimate	PMT and Project Partners	PMT, Rochester City Council
	Right-of-Way Cost Estimate	PMT and Project Partners	PMT, Rochester City Council
Task 12: Phased Improvements	Technical Memorandum No. 11 (Phasing Recommendations)	PMT and Project Partners	PMT
Task 13: Official Mapping	Official Map Documents	PMT and Project Partners	Olmsted County Board, Rochester City Council
Task 14: Public Involvement	Meeting Topics, Presentation Materials, and Format, etc.	PMT and Project Partners	PMT

\*Notes:

PMT – Project Management Team

Project Partners – Olmsted County, Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments, FHWA, and additional PMT agency staff as needed, to be determined by PMT members.

ROW – Right of Way