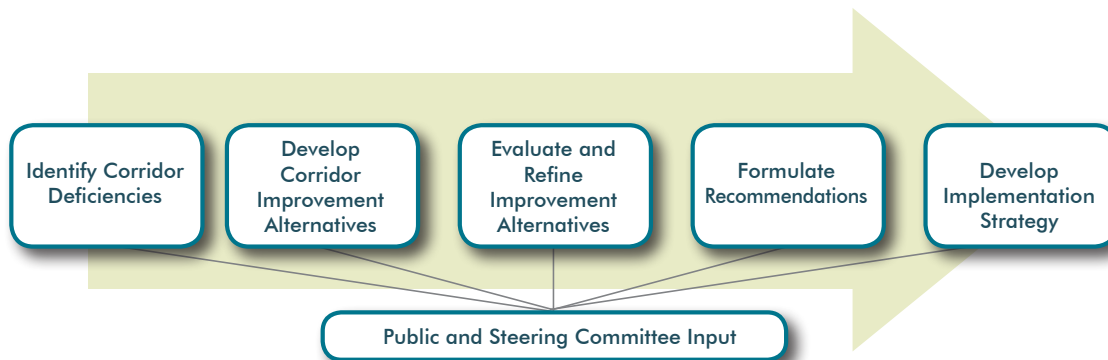


Planning Process

Planning Process

The methodology for the study included a broad five-step process (refer to FIGURE 2.1). The five-step process included identification of corridor needs and deficiencies, solution development, solution evaluation, recommendation formulation and implementation strategy development. Each step includes multiple levels of analyses to effectively reach the overall study goal. It is important to note every corridor is unique and requires a methodology specifically tailored to problems intended to be addressed. Although the broad methodology utilized for the study does not appear unique at first glance, the multiple levels of analysis included in each step were designed specifically to identify and address the corridor transportation needs.

FIGURE 2.1 – Planning Process for the Washington Street Corridor Study



First, corridor wide transportation deficiencies were identified. Deficiencies were analyzed from the viewpoint of the four main transportation stakeholders: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons. Consideration was not only given to each individual travel mode but the interconnection of each mode within the corridor to achieve an inviting and complete corridor.

Second, based upon the needs identified in step one, a universe of potential solutions was developed. The identification of potential solutions shaped the range of alternatives available for decision makers. Developed solutions addressed the purpose and goal of the study and included the necessary baseline “Do Nothing” alternative for comparative purposes. Other than the “Do Nothing” Solution, options that did not meet federal, city or NDDOT standards or requirements were discarded.

Third, solutions were evaluated through a detailed screening process. Solutions screening included review of previous remedial or alternate solutions and results, environmental constraints and impacts, public and private utility considerations and finally solution costs versus benefits. Based upon the evaluation process, solutions were refined, altered and many times eliminated.

Once the solution universe was narrowed and refined, the final corridor improvement strategies were established. This phase of the process includes improvement recommendations carried forth to the implementation phase. It is important to note the recommendations outlined in the study are subject to change prior to actual implementation based upon new or varied information uncovered during project development.

The final step in the planning process is implementation strategy development. The step provides local jurisdictions the necessary information to address the corridor transportation needs and guides the allocation and investment of transportation funds. This portion of the report identifies all project elements, includes programmatic cost estimates sufficient to include within local and regional Transportation Improvement Programs, evaluates options for funding sources and prepares a recommended prioritization-based schedule for implementation.

As denoted in FIGURE 2.1, public and steering committee input was obtained throughout the planning process. An effective public involvement program was a critical element for the Washington Street Corridor Study. Program success required an open and participatory process keeping community members well-informed about the project through information sharing, while offering key stakeholders ample opportunities to express views and be actively involved in the decision-making process.

Four public input and two landowner meetings were held to involve key stakeholders, local residents, adjacent businesses and the traveling public in the information-sharing and planning process. Public involvement complements technical analysis and steering committee guidance in providing information to decision-makers. Based upon public input, decision-makers can weigh results of both the technical analysis and public input and make a decision that is in the best interest of the community. Additional individual meetings were held with corridor stakeholders that would endure the greatest perceived impacts from the proposed improvements. This group included; the Fire Department, Xcel Energy and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

The study team met with the Washington Street Corridor Study Steering Committee throughout the study process to obtain input, provide status update briefings and seek guidance on technical issues. The steering committee was made up of local stakeholders and/or transportation or city policy experts who provided guidance on key study issues. Five committee meetings were held at key decision points allowing the study team to develop alternative roadway and safety improvements that are both effective and satisfactory to the general public. Finally, a presentation was created for NDDOT management and the Grand Forks City Council to provide an overview of the traffic analysis results and proposed roadway improvements.