



# BELGRADE to BOZEMAN **corridor** FRONTAGE ROAD **study**

## **Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)**

*Technical Memorandum*

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*Prepared for:*



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Helena, MT



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## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has identified a need to develop a corridor study along the Frontage Road between Belgrade and Bozeman, Montana. The study, referred to as the *Belgrade to Bozeman Frontage Road Corridor Study*, will identify feasible improvement options to address safety, operational, and geometrical concerns (i.e. road width, horizontal curves, vertical grades, approach density, etc.) within the study area based on needs identified by the public, the study partners, and resource agencies.

The purpose of the study is to develop a comprehensive, long-range plan for managing the corridor and determining what improvements could be made to improve the corridor based on identified needs, public and agency input, and financial constraints. Data examined will include geometric characteristics, crash history, operational characteristics, land uses, and environmental resources. The study will be a collaborative process between MDT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the cities of Belgrade and Bozeman, Gallatin County, resource agencies, and the public aimed at identifying transportation needs and potential solutions.

The final study report will include a comprehensive package of feasible short- and long-term improvement options intended to address the transportation needs over the next twenty years. Identifying these improvement options will help the study partners define the most critical needs and allocate resources.

### 1.1. CORRIDOR PLANNING PROCESS

MDT established the corridor planning process to investigate improvement options for the corridor via the Pre-National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Study, as provided for in current federal transportation policy. The corridor planning process will inform any projects that may develop from improvement options identified in the study. The process will help advance viable options for use in the NEPA/MEPA process, while providing an opportunity for partner involvement at all stages.

The corridor study process encourages early communication with interested parties to help identify needs, constraints, and opportunities to determine reasonable improvements given available resources and local support. Community, stakeholder, agency and other interested party involvement are important components in any successful planning process. For this study, a number of proposed involvement strategies will aid in reaching the most people possible to elicit meaningful participation. These opportunities will achieve the following goals:

- Educate corridor users regarding the critical elements included in the Pre-NEPA/MEPA Corridor Planning Study process.
- Provide opportunity for input and to solicit comments throughout the corridor planning study.
- Present findings and recommendations.

### 1.2. STUDY AREA

The study area for the *Belgrade to Bozeman Frontage Road Corridor Study* includes the Frontage Road beginning in Belgrade at the intersection of Main Street and Jackrabbit Lane and extending nine miles to the east to the Interstate 90 Exit 306 westbound ramps. The study area includes a 200-foot buffer from centerline along both sides of the roadway (for a total buffer width of 400 feet). The study area also includes East Valley Center Spur Road. **Figure 1** presents the location of the study corridor.

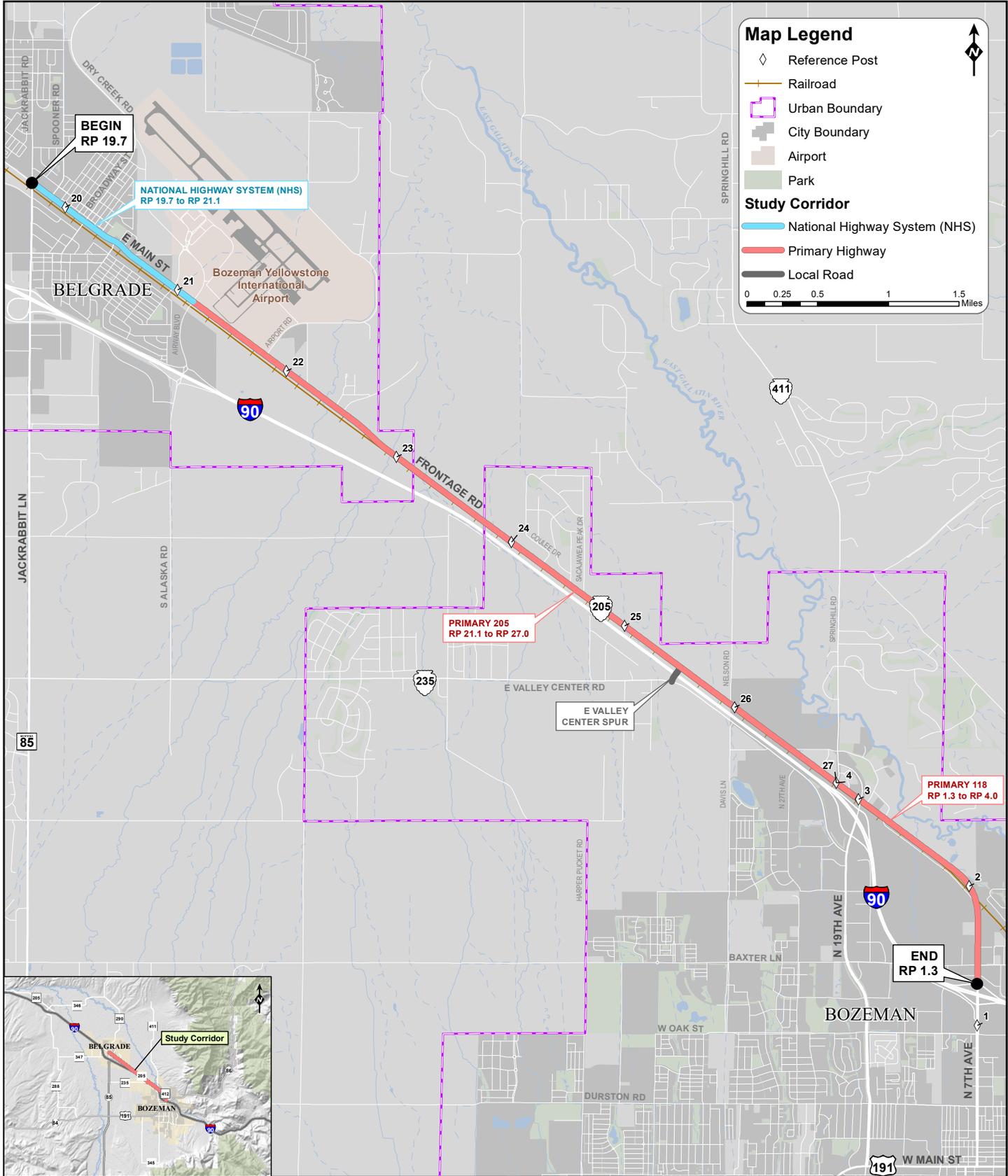


Figure 1: Study Area

### 1.3. GOALS OF PUBLIC AND AGENCY OUTREACH

An initial step in the corridor planning process is to develop a *Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)* that provides for and identifies public, stakeholder, and other interested party involvement activities needed to communicate information about existing and future corridor needs. The purpose of the *PAIP* is to establish a process that provides opportunities for interested parties to participate in all phases of the corridor planning process.

The primary goal is to provide ongoing opportunities for involvement by members of the public, stakeholders, and resource agency representatives throughout the planning study process. Education and outreach are essential elements in keeping individuals apprised about the planning study process. Providing complete information, timely notices, and opportunities to comment, as well as ensuring full access to key materials/documents, will help achieve this goal.

## 2.0. PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

Information regarding all aspects of the study will be provided to the public and interested parties. Their input will be solicited throughout the process. Active participation in identifying and commenting on study issues will be encouraged at every stage of the planning process. Participant involvement will include the following:

- The general public – residents of the city of Belgrade, Gallatin County, city of Bozeman, and adjacent areas
- Landowners and business owners within the study area
- Resource agencies
- Stakeholders and outreach groups
- Other interested parties

### 2.1. STUDY CONTACTS

All information published regarding the study will have contact information for MDT and RPA. Comments can be submitted throughout the study process via the website (see **Section 2.4**) or by contacting those individuals listed below:

**Jeff Ebert**  
*MDT Butte District Administrator*  
3751 Wynne  
PO Box 3068  
Butte, MT 59702-3068  
(406) 494-9625  
[jebert@mt.gov](mailto:jebert@mt.gov)

**Katie Potts**  
*MDT Project Manager*  
2960 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
(406) 444-9238  
[kpotts@mt.gov](mailto:kpotts@mt.gov)

**Jeff Key**  
*RPA Project Manager*  
825 Custer Ave  
PO Box 5653  
Helena, MT 59604  
(406) 447-5000  
[jeff.key@rpa-hln.com](mailto:jeff.key@rpa-hln.com)

### 2.2. MEDIA COORDINATION

Public meeting announcements will be developed and advertised at least three weeks prior to informational meetings. The ads will announce the meeting location, time, and date, the format and purpose of the meeting, and the locations where documents may be reviewed (if applicable). The *Bozeman Chronicle* and *Belgrade News* will carry the display ads. Meetings may also be announced on local radio and/or television stations.

Newsletters, flyers, or both, will be published one month before each informational meeting. The newsletters will describe work in progress, results achieved, preliminary recommendations, and other related topics. Newsletters and flyers will be delivered to the local government representatives of the

Advisory Committee, and the MDT Bozeman Area Office for distribution and posting to their respective internet sites. Print copies of newsletters will be available at the informational meetings.

## 2.3. STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders will include individuals, businesses, or groups with a direct presence or specific role in the corridor as identified by the Advisory Committee. Identification of stakeholders will enable actively seeking out and engaging them during the study process. Potential stakeholders include:

- Adjacent public and private landowners and businesses – including, but not limited, to:
  - BNSF Railway
  - Montana Rail Link
  - Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport
  - Knife River – Belgrade Division
  - TMC Sand and Gravel
  - Central Valley Fire District
  - Others (as identified throughout the planning process)

### 2.3.1. Other Interested Parties

In addition, there are others that may not have direct roles or responsibilities in the corridor, but nonetheless likely have a project interest and will be included on the study mailing list. Potential other interested parties may include:

- Gallatin Valley Land Trust
- Bozeman Area Bicycle Advisory Board
- Citizens for a Safer Bozeman and Gallatin County
- Bozeman Area Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee
- Bozeman Area Transportation Coordinating Committee
- Streamline Transit
- Collin's Coalition
- Montana Motor Carriers Association
- Others (as identified throughout the planning process)

A master email notification list will be created and maintained during the planning process. All individuals who attend informational meetings or other events and provide email addresses on sign in sheets will be added to the list to keep track of those desiring notification of future project related activities.

## 2.4. STUDY WEBSITE

A study website will be developed to encourage public interaction and to provide study information. The website will be updated as needed throughout the study process. The website will contain contact information, meeting announcements, frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the corridor study process, a description of the study, finalized documents, and interim memorandums. Upon completion, the following documents will be made available on the study website:

- Study Schedule
- Study Newsletters
- Public and Agency Involvement Plan
- Environmental Scan
- Existing and Projected Conditions Technical Memorandum
- Needs and Objectives Technical Memorandum

- Improvement Options Technical Memorandum
- Informational Meeting Presentations
- Public Draft Corridor Study Report
- Final Corridor Study Report

To supplement the conventional website format, two additional online public engagement tools will be used to solicit input. These include the use of a WikiMapping commenting platform and development of an ArcGIS Story Map. These tools are described in more detail below:

### 2.4.1. WikiMapping

MDT has an online commenting system used for all projects statewide that allows users to enter their name, address, phone number, and type written comments electronically. The comments are then forwarded to the appropriate MDT District personnel and public relations staff. To supplement this traditional electronic commenting method, an interactive commenting platform will be utilized which will allow the public to provide feedback on the performance of the existing transportation corridor in many of the same ways as a paper map would serve during a public meeting. Visitors to the WikiMapping platform will be able to leave notes, draw routes and identify areas of concern just as if they were present at an official project event. While this feature will not reach everyone, it will be a convenient way to provide feedback for a large portion of the population. We will also present our draft improvement options in a similar web-based map format that will be more user friendly to the public than a document map. A link will be included on the project website to allow users to view this platform online and comment accordingly.

### 2.4.2. ArcGIS Story Map

An ArcGIS Online Story Map will also supplement the traditional website to harness the power of maps and graphics to discuss constraints and opportunities for the study area. Story Maps will be created to allow users to see a variety of important information, such as maps, images, video and web content in a series to disseminate information and engage the interested audience. Story Maps are useful to present data, constraints and opportunities in a simple, graphical manner. They are very useful in showing a sequence of steps, such as the steps involved in arriving at improvement options for a corridor study, and are easily customizable.

## 2.5. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Electronic copies of study deliverables and technical memorandums will be posted on the study website. Additionally, study newsletters and the draft corridor study report will be made available at the following locations:

#### **City of Belgrade**

*Planning Department*  
91 East Central  
Belgrade, MT 59714

#### **City of Bozeman**

*Department of Public Works*  
20 East Olive Street, Suite 202  
Bozeman, MT 59715

#### **Gallatin County**

*Planning Department*  
311 West Main Street, Room 108  
Bozeman, MT 59715

#### **Montana Department of Transportation**

*Bozeman Area Office*  
100 Nelson Road  
Bozeman, MT 59772-3028

## 3.0. MEETINGS

There will be various planning and informational meetings throughout the corridor study process. The following sections will describe the various functions that each meeting type will serve.

### 3.1. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Advisory Committee meetings will be scheduled once a month over the 12-month study period. Groups included in the meetings will be the cities of Belgrade and Bozeman, Gallatin County, MDT, FHWA, and RPA. The meetings will track progress and address study development issues and questions. The meetings are important for the exchange of technical information and ideas during the development of the study. Throughout the meetings, the Advisory Committee will identify and discuss issues, problems, and possible solutions.

The Advisory Committee will consider all public comments received for the duration of the study. Public comments received on the draft report during the public comment period will be logged into a public comment matrix for consideration by the Advisory Committee. Written responses will not be offered to the individual making the comment unless a specific question response is warranted. Following publication of the draft report, an additional public comment matrix will be created to log public comments received specific to the draft report. The matrix will contain written responses as applicable. All public comments received, and any provided responses, will be considered and placed in the appendices to the final report.

### 3.2. INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Three informational meetings will take place during the study. The first informational meeting will occur very soon after our initial Advisory Committee meetings and after the website has been made available. The purpose of this meeting will be to explain the corridor study process and inform the public how to become involved.

The second informational meeting will occur following evaluation of the existing and projected conditions of the study area. The meeting will focus on introducing the study, presenting existing and projected conditions, and discussing preliminary issues and concerns within the study area. The meeting will allow members of the public to provide information about existing conditions and provide input for the needs and constraints of the corridor.

The third informational meeting will occur following completion of the draft *Corridor Study Report*. The purpose of this meeting will be to present the draft report and to discuss the recommended improvement options. Members of the public will be encouraged to provide feedback on the improvement options and draft report.

Comments will be considered throughout the planning process. An official 30-day comment period will be provided after the release of the draft report. Additionally, comments and concerns will be recorded at all informational meetings for consideration throughout the planning process.

### 3.3. RESOURCE AGENCY MEETING/INVOLVEMENT

A resource agency meeting will be scheduled and held at the MDT Planning office in Helena. Polycom arrangements will be provided at the MDT Bozeman Area Office, as appropriate. The purpose of the meeting will be to present the findings of the draft *Environmental Scan* developed by MDT as well as the initial findings of the *Existing and Projected Conditions Technical Memorandum*. The resource agencies will be asked to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the information and to help identify initial avoidance areas, mitigation needs, and opportunities.

### 3.4. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

Coincident to informational meetings number 2 and 3, two workshops may be held with interested stakeholders either in conjunction with the Bozeman TCC regular meetings, or at a neutral site. These workshops would be more intimate and informal than the regular informational meetings, and would allow the interested stakeholders a more collaborative role in giving their comments and learning about the planning process and conclusions.

### 3.5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Additional efforts are necessary to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population, including disabled, minority, and low-income residents. Including these groups will help to ensure planning that reflects everyone's needs. The following steps will help with these efforts:

- Plan meeting locations carefully: We will hold informational meetings in locations that are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a targeted population is located in a certain geographic part of a city or county, then the meeting location should be close to the area for convenience.
- Seek help from community leaders and organizations: To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, we will consult with community leaders and organizations representing these groups about the most effective ways to reach their members.
- Be sensitive to diverse audiences: At informational meetings, study partner staff and RPA will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Presenters will avoid using technical jargon, and staff will wear appropriate dress and adhere to common rules of conduct.

### 3.6. ACCESSIBILITY

The State of Montana attempts to provide accessible information and services to all individuals. We will employ the following measures for this study:

- We will host informational meetings in locations that are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- We will confer with the leaders of the communities and representative organizations about how best to involve traditionally underserved populations.

The following required ADA statement will be included on all published materials:

*Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-9229. Those using a TTY may call 1(800)335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.*

## 4.0. OVERALL STUDY COMMUNICATION

The following communication strategies and techniques will be used to distribute study information to the community at large and to seek a higher level of engagement.

- All draft and final deliverables and associated materials will be posted on the study website.
- Newsletters will be provided at least one month before each informational meeting.
- Press releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications will be developed.

- Technical memorandums will be posted to the study’s website. They will also be distributed to the Advisory Committee to provide a better understanding of proposed issues and recommendations and, in return, to provide the study partners with feedback and an opportunity for continual comment.
- An interactive online commenting platform will be created and embedded in the study website.
- An ArcGIS Online Story Map will be created and embedded in the study website.
- Hard copies of all materials can be made available at the locations described previously.
- Upon request, special presentations may be made to groups and organizations.

Questions and comments from interested parties concerning the participation process, draft technical memorandums, draft Corridor Study documents, and other work products will be included in an appendix to the actual documents.

## 5.0. STUDY SCHEDULE

Adherence to the study schedule is important to stay on track and to keep all participating parties engaged. **Figure 2** contains the study schedule.

### Belgrade to Bozeman Frontage Road Corridor Study

#### STUDY SCHEDULE

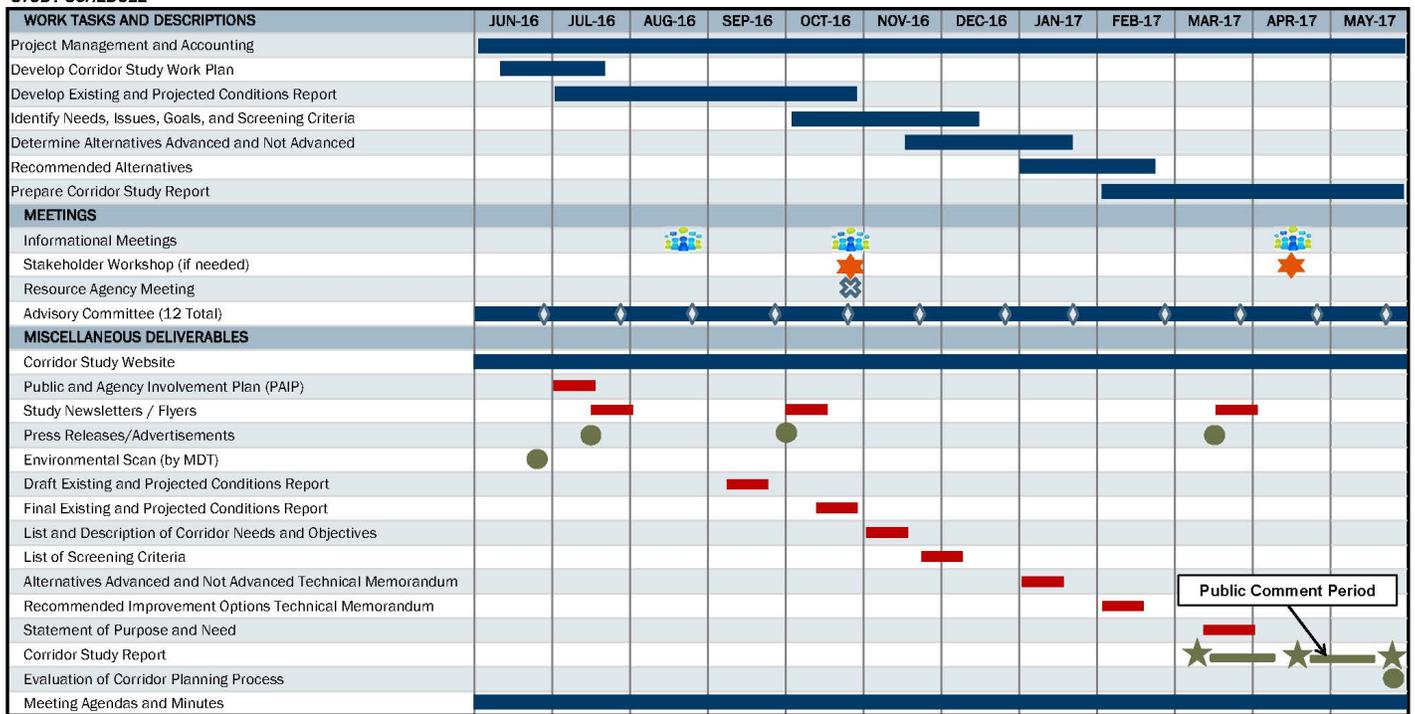


Figure 2: Study Schedule