

8.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT (Permits and Approvals)

8.1 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

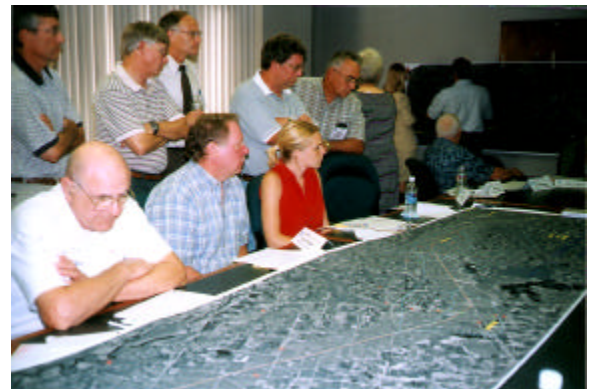
The purpose of the TH 14 West IRC Public and Agency Involvement Process is to ensure the affected governmental agencies and the public have ample opportunity to participate in supporting the decision-making process in the TH 14 West Interregional Corridor. The corridor communities have been actively involved in an open, collaborative process during the development and evaluation of alternatives for sound roadway decisions. The approach has been to:

- Communicate with and involve local residents and elected officials in identifying the needs and evaluating the proposed alternatives.
- Communicate with the public, communities, and agencies on the importance of the interrelationship of transportation and land use planning, and the impacts and opportunities of each of the alternatives for their community.
- Involve local residents in identifying deficiencies and provide opportunities for input into the decision-making process.
- Gain insights into issues of greatest concern or interest to the public and municipalities in the TH 14 West Corridor and incorporate them into decision-making factors.

The TH 14 West IRC Public and Agency Involvement Program includes an Advisory Committee, Project Management Team, public information open house, public outreach, and a Scoping Hearing. The communications program in support of this program includes newsletters, press releases, and information for placement on the Mn/DOT District-7 web site.

Advisory Committee

The TH 14 West IRC Advisory Committee is comprised of elected officials and planning and engineering staff representing the cities, townships, counties, and state agencies along the TH 14 West Interregional Corridor between New Ulm and North Mankato. Their role is to provide input on policy issues and guidance on technical decisions affecting their agencies or governmental unit. A critical role for the Advisory Committee is to provide two-way communication between the Project Management Team and their agency/municipality and the community.



Advisory Committee members have identified issues, goals, and objectives, and potential alternatives. Here they are reviewing alternatives to determine which ones best meet the needs in the corridor.

TH 14 West Advisory Committee

COUNTIES	
Nicollet	Paul Engel, County Board (Began as of 1/03) Judy Hanson, County Board (participated through 12/02, continues as interested party) Mike Wagner, County Engineer Tina Rosenstein, Environmental Services Director
Brown	Wayne Stevens, County Engineer Charles Guggisberg, County Commissioner
Blue Earth	Colleen Landkamer, County Board Alan Forsberg, County Engineer
CITIES	
Courtland	Bob Schabert, Mayor Dan Wietecha, City Administrator
Nicollet	R. Mark Blais, Mayor (Mayor through 12/02, continues to represent Nicollet) Dan Wietecha, City Administrator
North Mankato	Nancy Knutson, Mayor (participated through 12/02) Lowell Sieberg, Mayor (began as of 1/03) Wendell Sande, City Administrator
New Ulm	Joel Albrecht, Mayor (as of 1/03) (Council Member through 2002) Steve Koehler, City Engineer
Mankato	Mike Laven, City Council Ken Saffert, City Engineer
TOWNSHIPS	
Courtland	Florence Arbes, Supervisor
Nicollet	John Prosch, Supervisor
OTHER	
Reg. 9 Dev. Comm.	Jack Fitsimmons, TAC Chair Wes Judkins, Planning Director
Minnesota DNR	Victoria Poage, Environmental Assessment Ecologist (participated through 12/02) Leo Getsfried, Hydrologist (began as of 1/03)
MSU-Mankato	Perry Wood, Professor/Physical Planner
Minnesota PCA	Jim Seaberg, Transportation Planning

Project Management Team

The Project Management Team (PMT) includes key staff responsible for reviewing and approving the Corridor Management Plan, the Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document, and the Scoping Decision Document. The PMT is comprised of key reviewing staff from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); US Army Corps of Engineers; and Mn/DOT's Office of Environmental Services, Project Liaison Office, and the Interregional Corridor Manager, as well as Mn/DOT District 7 planning and engineering staff and the consultant team. The purpose of this technique is to include the full spectrum of people with review and approval responsibilities in the early and continuing education about the project and to get input from them as the project develops.

The role of the PMT is to provide oversight and project management, identify deficiencies and opportunities, confirm project goals and objectives, review potential alternatives, evaluate mitigation strategies, and recommend a combination of short-term and long-term strategies for the TH 14 West Interregional Corridor.

14 WEST IRC PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

<i>Mn/DOT District 7</i>	Mark Scheidel, Project Manager James Swanson, District Engineer Lisa Bigham, Planning Director Larry Filter, Pre Design Marc Flygare, Traffic Engineer Rebecca Arndt, Public Affairs Douglas Haeder, State Aid Engineer
<i>Mn/DOT</i>	Dick Bautch, IRC Manager Gerry Larson, Office of Environmental Services
<i>U.S Army Corps of Engineers</i>	Tamara Cameron, NEPA Coordinator
<i>FHWA</i>	Cheryl Martin, Environmental Engineering Tim Anderson, Highway Engineer
<i>Howard R. Green Company</i>	Howard Preston, Project Director Biz Colburn, Project Manager Lynn Kiesow, Traffic Engineer Scott Reed, Project Scientist

Public Information Open House

Public Information Open House - May 21, 2002

Over 100 people attended the Public Information Open House held on May 21, 2002 at the Courtland Community Center. This interactive format brought forth many comments and discussion on the approach to take in developing a safer TH 14 between New Ulm and North Mankato. The information displayed helped to educate the public on the deficiencies in the corridor. Input from the public was received by written comment and by noting issues on aerial mapping of the corridor. There were 22 written comments received at the Public Meeting each addressing multiple issues, as follows:

- Bypasses of Courtland and Nicollet were suggested by half of the people, with preference for a south bypass of Nicollet and north bypass of Courtland.
- A four-lane roadway is preferred for mobility and safety reasons.
- Additional passing zones were requested to address existing safety and mobility issues.
- Increased truck traffic along the roadway raises concerns about safety because the trucks travel too fast and it is difficult to cross the highway.
- Improving the intersection of TH 14/TH 15 was mentioned by a number of people.
- Intersections that need controlled access or an interchange include:
 - CSAH 37,
 - CR 41, and
 - TH 111

Public and Agency Participation Meetings

Date	Meeting	Time	Place
November 27, 2001	Project Management Team	10:00 AM to 12:00	Mn/DOT CO
February 11, 2002	Project Management Team	10:00 AM to 12:00	Courtland Community Center
February 11, 2002	Advisory Committee	2:00 to 4:00 PM	Courtland Community Center
April 23, 2002	Project Management Team	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Mn/DOT CO
May 22, 2002	Public Information Open House	4:30 to 7:00 PM	Courtland Community Center
June 5, 2002	Project Management Team	10:00AM to 12:30PM	Mn/DOT D-7
July 9, 2002	Coordination with City of Nicollet	4:00 to 5:00 PM	Nicollet City Hall
July 18, 2002	Project Management Team	9:30 to 11:30 AM	Mn/DOT CO
September 5, 2002	Project Management Team	10:00 AM to 12:30PM	Mn/DOT D-7
September 5, 2002	Advisory Committee	1:30 to 4:30 PM	Nicollet County Service Building
January 6, 2003	Project Management Team	1:30 to 4:30 PM	Mn/DOT D-7
February 10, 2003	Advisory Committee	3:00 to 5:00 PM	Nicollet County Service Building
February 4, 2003	Coordination with west end counties, cities, township, and agencies	3:00 to 4:30 PM	Courtland City Hall
March 10, 2003	Advisory Committee	2:00 to 4:00 PM	Nicollet County Service Building
April 7, 2003	Project Management Team		
April 23, 2003	Scoping Hearings	2:00 to 3:30 PM-Agency 4:30 to 7:00 PM-Public	
May xx, 2003	Project Management Team		
June xx, 2003	Project Management Team		

Communications Program

The Communications tools used for the TH 14 West Interregional Corridor include newsletters, fact sheets, press releases, information for the Mn/DOT District 7 Web Site, and information for the press.

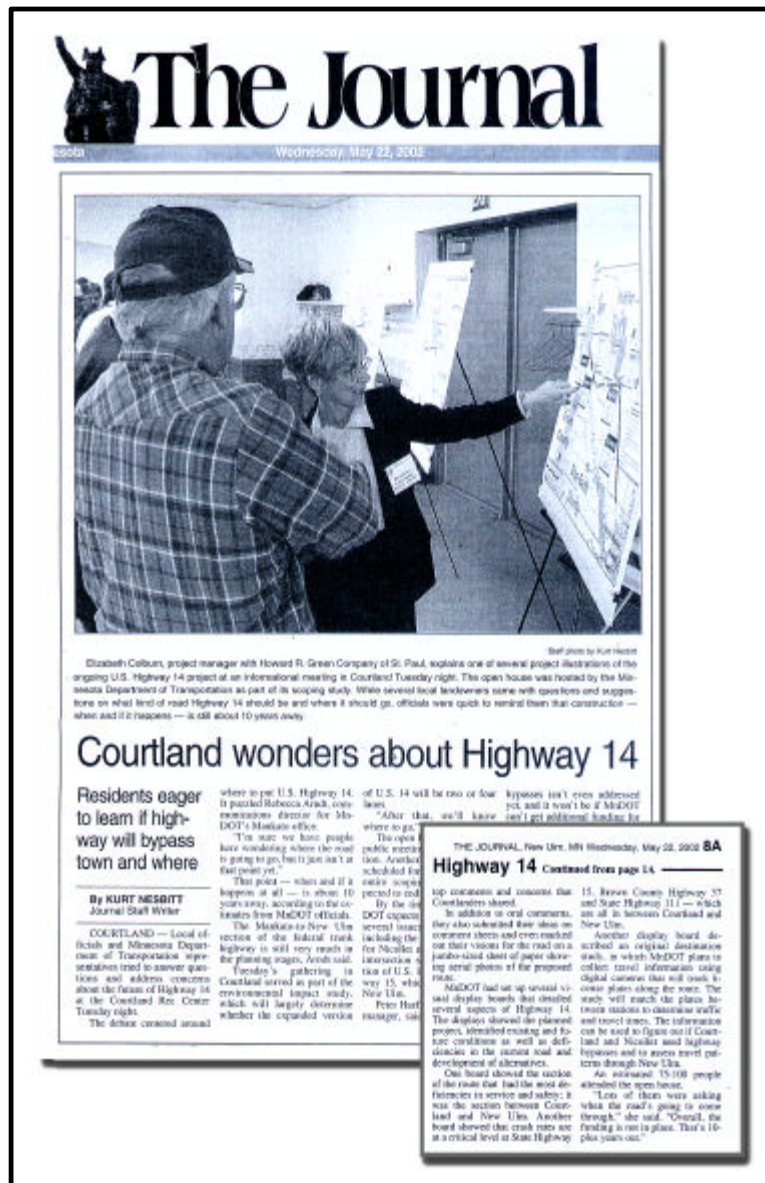
Newsletters -are developed announcing the Public Information Open Houses, Scoping Hearing, and to inform the public at key milestones in the project. These are distributed to the Advisory Committee members for their use in notifying their constituencies.

Fact Sheet - was developed describing key facts about the TH 14 West IRC. The Fact Sheet describes the TH 14 West IRC project, the role of TH 14 in the regional roadway system, especially as a part of the Interregional Corridor system adopted by Mn/DOT in January 2000; and the process of developing a Corridor Management Plan and the Scoping Decision Document.

Website - Information is submitted for the Mn/DOT District 7 web site that includes: study area map, existing and future traffic volumes, fact sheet, schedule, the Advisory Committee and PMT members, newsletter, press releases, public meeting announcements, and the contact person for more information.

Press Releases - were developed announcing the Public Information Open Houses and Scoping Hearings and circulated to newspapers in the area.

Newspaper Articles - Information has been provided to reporters in response to their requests. In addition, reporters have attended the Public Meetings to learn more about the development of the project. As a result, newspaper articles about the TH 14 West IRC have been in the New Ulm Journal.



8.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

Coordination meetings with the various resource agencies will be initiated when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) commences. Coordination will continue throughout the planning and design phase of the proposed project.

8.3 PERMITS, REVIEWS AND APPROVALS

There are two processes going on concurrently for the TH 14 West IRC Project: the development of the Corridor Management Plan and the Scoping process. Both of these will need review and approval prior to moving on with the project development process. When funding is available, the project will move forward into the EIS process, which also will need permits, reviews, and approvals. This section outlines the review and approvals that may be needed for each.

8.3.1 Corridor Management Plan and Scoping Process Reviews and Approvals

In order to complete the Corridor Management Plan and the Scoping Process for the TH 14 Interregional Corridor, the following reviews and approvals may be needed:

Government Agency	Type of Review or Approval
State	
Mn/DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corridor Management Plan Approval ▪ Scoping Document Approval ▪ Scoping Decision Document Approval
County/City/Township	
City of Courtland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corridor Management Plan Review and Approval ▪ Resolution in Support of CMP
City of Nicollet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corridor Management Plan Review and Approval ▪ Resolution in Support of CMP
Nicollet County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corridor Management Plan Review and Approval ▪ Resolution in Support of CMP
City of New Ulm	Corridor Management Plan Review
City of North Mankato	Corridor Management Plan Review
City of Mankato	Corridor Management Plan Review
Courtland Township	Corridor Management Plan Review
Nicollet Township	Corridor Management Plan Review
Region 9 Development Commission	Corridor Management Plan Review

8.3.2 Environmental Impact Statement Permits, Reviews and Approvals

If Mn/DOT receives funding to move forward with an Environmental Impact Statement for the project, the following permits and approvals may be needed and are listed in the following table:

Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval, or Permit
Federal	
Federal Highway Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIS approval, • Record of Decision, • Section 4(f)/6(f) (if needed) • Section 106 MOA (if needed)
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Section 7 consultation (if applicable)
US Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit
State	
MN Department of Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Waters permit • Water Appropriations permit (if needed) • Natural Heritage Database review and consultation (if applicable)
MN Pollution Control Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit • 401 Water Quality Certification • Storm Sewer Permit (if applicable) • Sanitary sewer permit (if applicable)
Mn/DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIS approval, • EIS Adequacy Determination • Section 106 MOA (if needed) • Wetland Conservation Act LGU authority
State Historic Preservation Officer	Historic Concurrence/Section 106 MOA (if needed)
MN Dept. of Health	Water main plan review (if applicable)
County/City/Township	
City of Courtland	Plan Review and Approval
City of Nicollet	Plan Review and Approval
Nicollet County	Plan Review
City of New Ulm	Plan Review
City of North Mankato	Plan Review
City of Mankato	Plan Review
Courtland Township	Plan Review
Nicollet Township	Plan Review
Region 9 Development Commission	Plan Review

8.4 SCOPING DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION LIST

Federal Agencies

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Federal Highway Administration

State Agencies

- Environmental Quality Board
- Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Regional/Local Agencies

- Nicollet County
- Blue Earth County
- Brown County
- City of Courtland
- City of Nicollet
- City of New Ulm
- City of North Mankato
- City of Mankato
- Courtland Township
- Nicollet Township

Tribes

- Flandreau Santee Sioux
- Lower Sioux Indian Community of Minnesota Mdewakanton Sioux Indians
- Prairie Island Community Council
- Santee Sioux Tribal Council
- Spirit Lake Tribe
- Upper Sioux Indian Community
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux
- Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Nation

Libraries

- Legislative Reference Library
- Environmental Conservation Library

- Blue Earth County Public Library
- North Mankato Public Library
- New Ulm Public Library

Other

- Region 9 Development Commission
- MN State University-Mankato

Source: EQB Website, January 2003; Federal Highway Administration

9.0 LEVEL OF ACTION

This project, TH 14: North Mankato to New Ulm, is considered a federal Class I action because there is the potential for significant environmental effect as documented in the Social, Economic, and Environmental Section. This project meets the Mandatory EIS threshold test in Minnesota Rule part 4410.4400 Subp. 16.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is the responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for this project.