The Minnesota Department of Transportation’s Corridor Investment Management Strategy (CIMS) is a corridor-based initiative that brings MnDOT together with its local, modal and state partners to identify opportunities for collaborative and innovative investment. It offers a means to share information and identify opportunities to apply MnDOT’s suite of lower cost, high benefit investment strategies that address safety, access and mobility.

The following summary conveys key themes and specific comments recorded by MnDOT staff during facilitated discussions at the CIMS outreach meeting on June 7, 2012 in Windom, as well as written comments submitted by participants via completed participant guides and follow-up emails. As part of an ongoing, collaborative initiative between MnDOT and its partners, CIMS meeting summaries are intended to document what MnDOT has heard to this point in the CIMS process and offer potential starting points for further discussions around regional/local priorities and opportunities for lower-cost, high-benefit investments.

**Meeting Overview**

The CIMS meeting began with a short introduction from MnDOT Assistant District Engineer Gordy Regensheid, followed by a presentation from MnDOT staff members Brian McLafferty and Mary Safgren that described the CIMS initiative, the condition of the trunk highway system, MnDOT’s fiscal outlook, and the approaches that MnDOT is taking to advance objectives in the areas of preservation, safety, mobility and regional/local priorities (Click here to review the full presentation).

The presentation was followed by a discussion of MnDOT’s recent investments, programmed investments, and anticipated investment needs on three corridors:

- MN 60 (from Worthington to Mankato)
- I-90 (from South Dakota to the Faribault County line)
- US 71 (from Iowa to the Cottonwood County Line)

Each corridor was discussed at a workstation where MnDOT staff walked participants through a series of maps that displayed information relating to MnDOT’s investment program. All map series are available for download on the CIMS website. After reviewing the maps, meeting participants were asked to describe their regional/community priorities and the needs, issues, and opportunities they see on the corridor. Examples of the questions posed include:

- **What are your regional/community goals relating to economic vitality and quality of life?**
- What community/economic development strategies is your city or county pursuing, and how could corridor improvements or system management strategies help advance them?
- Among the investments MnDOT needs to make in the years beyond the STIP to keep the system in a safe and sound condition, which are your highest priorities?
- Are there local system improvements or development plans that could be coordinated with MnDOT investments?
- As MnDOT develops improvements to keep the system in a safe and sound condition, what additional needs/issues/opportunities should MnDOT consider in project scope and design?
- What are the most critical issues on the corridor that may require investment beyond MnDOT’s planned improvements?

**Stakeholder Input**

**MN 60**

Much of the discussion around MN 60 centered on the importance of connections that link the highway to communities, freight generators, and intermodal facilities along the corridor. When asked about regional goals and development strategies, multiple participants indicated that they are pursuing safer, more convenient access to MN 60 as a way of promoting vibrant commercial centers and the efficient movement of goods to market. This is especially important in bypassed towns. Participants noted that connections on/off MN 60 need to be of adequate width, height and carrying capacity to handle large loads, with one person suggesting that MnDOT extend the 10-ton road network. A number of comments noted that MN 60’s performance as a freight corridor depends on the ability of these connections to carry trucks between the highway and intermodal terminals along the parallel rail line.

Another issue that received a lot of discussion was bike/ped accommodations. Multiple participants conveyed support for making MN 60 a multi-use corridor with paths/trails that facilitate safe movement of pedestrians and bicyclists. One participant suggested that MnDOT consider investing in trail connections between communities with trails in place, while another participant asked that MnDOT incorporate bike amenities into future MN 60 bridge projects. Most of the bike/ped-related comments referenced issues in town, especially in Windom where existing conditions on MN 60 make it difficult for residents to bike/walk to jobs, services, or recreational opportunities on the far side of the highway. Participants indicated that MnDOT should promote choice and healthy transportation alternatives by constructing sidewalks and biking paths that improve mobility and increase the continuity between MN 60 and the local road system.

Participants also commented on local efforts to improve safety/mobility on MN 60 through access management plans and zoning ordinances. There was a lot of emphasis on setbacks – multiple participants stressed the importance of preserving right of way to facilitate future capacity expansion. A number of participants suggested the completion of the four lane expansion on MN 60 would bring a significant increase in truck traffic on the highway, and that this would necessitate further improvements. Participants also indicated that there is need to limit “cross-over points” on MN 60 in Windom through the use of medians (curbed islands) and/or frontage roads. MnDOT was encouraged to
work with Windom and other communities on their access managements plans. Multiple participants offered US 169 through St. Peter as a potential model, although some comments also raised the possibility of a Windom bypass.

In response to a question about collaboration opportunities, participants mentioned a number of ongoing or anticipated developments with impacts on MN 60 traffic partners. In Windom, participants noted a planned industrial park near the US 71/MN 60 N. junction, the establishment of a commercial TIF district along MN 60, the upcoming expansion of Toro and PM Windom, pavement improvements on 16th Street, and the potential for MN 60 to better connect Windom residents to the businesses, rec complex, and ball fields located in the northeast end of town. One participant commented that MnDOT could encourage redevelopment in Windom by making culvert improvements that help lower the MN 60 flood plain. There were also comments about potential development along Cottonwood CR 1 near Mountain Lake and the quarry north of Bigham Lake (increasing freight truck volume on MN 60).

Another issue that came up numerous times was highway maintenance. Participants noted that roadway condition/pavement quality has important implications for traveler safety and goods movement. There were also a number of comments about prairie restoration/highway aesthetics. Multiple participants thought MnDOT could lower maintenance costs and increase quality of life along the corridor by replacing grass in the ROW with native wild flowers.

Regarding safety, there appeared to be a strong consensus among the group that the intersection of MN 60/CR 9 in Heron Lake is dangerous and should be addressed. A number of comments noted blind spots / short sight distances that makes turns onto MN 60 risky. MnDOT was encouraged to remove trees and fences to increase visibility. MnDOT was also encouraged to continue with low cost, high benefit safety improvements (rumble strips, better intersection lighting, advance warning signs, more speed checks) after the completion of the 4-lane expansion. There were also a number of comments about the distance between MN 60 and the parallel rail line. Participants noted that short connections result in traffic stacking out onto the highway. It was suggested that MnDOT pull the highway away from the rail line when possible and/or close access where appropriate.

Spot issues or critical priorities cited by participants

- Heron Lake: Highway 60 and County Road 9 Intersection
  - “Death trap”, “Impossible to cross safely”
  - 600 feet sight distance
- Explore Windom bypass
- Intersection improvements in Windom
  - MN 60/16th Street (priority ped crossing)
  - MN 60/10th Street lights
  - MN 60/6th Street lights
- Unsafe access point at PJs in Bigham Lake
- Fund turn-back projects. Many of these are reasonable investments with long-term savings for the state

Coordination opportunities cited by participants

- Redevelopment/expansion in northeast Windom
North Windom Industrial Park
- Toro and PM Windom expansion
- TIF District
- Recreational Complex
- US 71 / MN 60 roundabout
- Pavement work on 16th Street
- Culvert work to lower flood plain

- Access Management on MN 60 in Windom (modeled on St. Peter)

Other comments
- CIMS maps should display freight generators in addition to major intermodal terminals
- Remember, our goal for traffic fatalities is zero deaths. Just because we’re better than the state overall, doesn’t mean we’re close to our actual goal.
- Does allowing more non-conventional vehicles (4-wheelers, snow-mobiles, etc.) on trunk highways or trunk highway ROW run counter to the Toward Zero Death initiative? Perhaps MnDOT should restrict access.
- [Additional Comment Received after Meeting: consider natural habitat in the ditches and center when redoing the corridor. It would be wonderful to have natural prairie plants for the birds, insects and small mammals.]

I-90

A small group of meeting participants met with MnDOT staff to review maps and discuss issues, needs, and opportunities on I-90. During the discussion, participants inquired about Transportation and Economic Development (TED) awards to the City of Jackson and the City of Worthington. (Jackson’s TED award will help fund a diamond interchange at I-90 and CR 34; Worthington’s TED award will extend a four-lane divided section of US 59 another 1,200 feet to the north). Participants also provide input regarding issues/potential improvements at the intersection of US 71 and Jackson CR 38.

In addition, the following comments were recorded:
- Road closures are not announced prior to the closure on MN media. SD announces closures before they occur
- Can changeable message boards be oriented or something to reduce glare from the sun
- Take a look at what feeds traffic on and off I-90
- MN 86 is the route into Iowa instead of US 71 to avoid the congestion at Spirit Lake
- Sioux Falls metro trails goes on RR east to MN line. If MN trails are extended, they should meet up
- Turnback commission – does it still meet
- On CIMS maps, add links to safety plan and other things that are relevant (STIP, etc.)
- Make a decent MnDOT search engine to find things
- Whenever possible, use renewable energy. Look to energy office for funding assistance
• **[Additional Comment Received after Meeting]**: consider natural habitat in the ditches and center when redoing the corridor. It would be wonderful to have natural prairie plants for the birds, insects and small mammals.]

**US 71**

A small group of meeting participants reviewed the corridor maps for US 71 between Willmar and the Iowa border. They indicated that US 71 is similar to MN 60 in regards to the importance to the region’s economy and quality of life. US 71 and its connections link the region’s agricultural, manufacturing, biomass, wind energy and other business sectors to the global economy. Comments included:

• Chief Sleepy Eye Trail should be shown along Highway 67
• MnDOT should work with Iowa DOT to address the curve on Highway 86 where it crosses the border
• Consideration by MnDOT should be given for safety improvements south of Redwood Falls on US 71 due to unsafe passing. A potential safety improvement could be a “2+1” which includes segments of passing lanes
• Construction of a Redwood Falls Bypass should be considered
• Potential routes of the Des Moines River Trail must cross US 71 in Windom creating safety concerns
• **[Additional Comment Received after Meeting]**: consider natural habitat in the ditches and center when redoing the corridor. It would be wonderful to have natural prairie plants for the birds, insects and small mammals.]

**Next Steps**

MnDOT will soon be developing a new 20-year Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP) for the purpose of guiding future capital improvements on the trunk highway system. CIMS meeting summaries are one of many inputs to MnSHIP (click here to learn more about the process for developing MnSHIP and the various ways in which you can participate). Broadly speaking, the role of CIMS in the development of MnSHIP is twofold:

1. Promote the consideration of regional and community priorities and state/local collaboration opportunities in MnDOT’s performance-based planning process. Through MnSHIP, MnDOT districts will develop a universe of highway improvements necessary to meet and maintain system performance targets over the next 10 years. Information obtained through CIMS outreach will help MnDOT districts identify and prioritize performance-based investments with the potential to address local concerns and advance objectives relating to quality of life, economic competitiveness, and environmental health.

2. Provide a transparent, systematic, and collaborative approach to identifying and prioritizing regional/community improvement priorities not tied to system performance targets. Such an approach will help MnDOT and its external partners consider tradeoffs and balance spending levels across regional/community improvement priorities (RCIPs) and other key investment categories in the MnSHIP investment framework (traveler safety, asset management, and critical connections.)
MnDOT will also soon be developing a competitive solicitation as part of the CIMS initiative. MnDOT anticipates releasing proposed criteria and details on the application process in fall 2012 with a first round of applications due in early 2013. An additional next step is the development of “10-year Corridor Outlooks” for all of the corridors that were covered in this initial round of CIMS meetings. As presently conceived, corridor outlooks will function as snapshots of programmed and planned investments, anticipated investment needs, and ongoing planning efforts on corridors over a 10-year period. These outlooks are intended to be short, easy to digest, and regularly updated.

Under the current schedule, outlooks for corridors covered in the initial round of CIMS meetings will be rolled out with the adopted version of MnSHIP in spring 2013. The outlooks will display what the new investment plan means at the corridor level. The outlooks will also be an opportunity for MnDOT to highlight CIMS-identified needs that are being addressed via a planned project, management strategy, a planning study, or an ongoing discussion between MnDOT and its partners.

**Meeting Attendees**

**MnDOT**

Angelica Altimarano  District 7  
Greta Alquist  Office of Transit  
Brett Benzkofer  District 7  
Steve Bowers  District 7  
Brian McLafferty  Office of Capital Programs and Performance Measures  
Scott Morgan  District 7  
Gordy Regenscheid  District 7  
Mary Safgren  District 7  
Mark Scheidel  District 7  
Bob Williams  District 7  

**Non-MnDOT**

Annette Bair  SWRDC  
David Benson  Nobles County Commissioner  
Ronald Gregg  Cottonwood County  
Donald Holmberg  SRDC  
Allen Jensen  Heron Lake EDA  
Diana Madsen  SHIP  
Wendy Meyer  City of Mt Lake  
Steve Nasby  City of Windom  
Lori Nusbaum  St. James Chamber of Commerce
Carmen Reckard  Human Services of Faribault & Martin Cos.
Stephen Schnieder  SW MN TH 60 Action Corporation

Click [here](http://www.mndot.gov/cims) to provide corrections, clarifications, or additional comments to the meeting summary.