



Corridors of Commerce

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Corridors of Commerce program?

Corridors of Commerce is a program of competitive state grants, augmented with local funding, that targets transportation routes identified as vital links for regional and statewide economic growth. The program became law during the 2013 legislative session (2013 Session Laws, Chapter 117; and M.S. 161.088).

2. What are the program's goals?

The legislation established two major goals for the program: to provide additional highway capacity on segments where there are currently bottlenecks in the system, and to safely improve the movement of freight and reduce barriers to commerce.

3. How much funding was set aside for the program?

The legislation provided \$300 million in trunk highway bonding for the program, which becomes available July 1, 2014.

4. What are the eligibility criteria for the program?

In order to be considered for selection, a project must be consistent with the statewide multimodal transportation plan and be located on an interregional corridor or supplemental freight route in Greater Minnesota and on a state trunk highway in the Twin Cities metro area.

5. Can a project currently programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program be funded through the program?

No. The program is intended to identify projects that promote commerce and freight mobility and that are not currently programmed for construction.

6. What criteria were used to evaluate project recommendations?

Projects were evaluated on the basis of project readiness, return on investment and support from the MnDOT district and local and regional agencies. Return on investment criteria includes safety, travel time, environmental impacts, operating and lifecycle costs, and debt service.

7. What constraints are there on when a project must be constructed and delivered?

Funding for the program becomes available July 1, 2014. Because the program is financed with trunk highway bonds, and to capitalize on program benefits as soon as possible, construction on all projects must begin no later than July 1, 2016. MnDOT is working on a schedule that will have projects start in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

8. How did the process invite public and stakeholder input?

The legislation requires MnDOT to “accept recommendations on candidate projects from area transportation partnerships and other interested stakeholders in each MnDOT district.” Project recommendations were submitted by public sector partners, stakeholders and interested citizens

statewide, with input from MnDOT district offices. MnDOT received more than 400 submissions representing more than 100 unique projects.

9. Will projects that were proposed but not selected this time be considered in future Corridors of Commerce rounds?

The law says the department will “annually accept recommendations on candidate projects.” However, no funding source has yet been designated for any future round of project selections.

10. What happens if the total actual cost of all projects comes in either lower or higher than the \$300 million currently authorized for the program?

The estimated costs currently identified for each project are preliminary. At this point, MnDOT does not anticipate that the total will come in over \$300 million. As the program progresses, and if the costs go higher than the allocated amount, MnDOT will develop a plan to address that issue.

For More Information

Visit: www.mndot.gov/corridorsofcommerce/