# 6.0 SCOPING OF ALTERNATIVES AND STAGING OF IMPLEMENTATION

During the development of this Corridor Management Plan (CMP), deficiencies were identified and a universe of location and design alternatives developed to address the safety, operations, and geometric needs in the corridor. These alternatives were taken through the formal Scoping process. The preliminary findings presented in the Scoping Document were reviewed by the various federal, state, and local agencies involved in the project, as well as the public prior to Mn/DOT making the decision on the scope of a future project. This section provides a summary of the completed Scoping process, the alternatives dismissed and the alternatives retained in the Scoping Decision Document, a suggested staging of implementation, and interim measures that could be implemented before funding is available to begin construction on a preferred alternative.

## 6.1 SCOPING PROCESS

The Scoping process includes the development and distribution of the Scoping Document/D*raft* Scoping Decision Document for review and comment, public and agency input at the Scoping Hearings and during the 30-day comment period, and a final Scoping Decision Document. The following is a summary of that process.

### 6.1.1 Summary of Scoping

**Purpose of Scoping** - Scoping is the first step in the environmental documentation process where a reasonable range of alternatives and issues to be considered and/or resolved are identified to reduce the scope and bulk of the future Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Trunk Highway (TH) 14 project is complying with all federal and state regulations regarding the evaluation of the alternatives to provide the needed transportation facilities in the corridor.

**Scoping Document/*Draft* Scoping Decision Document** - Information from this CMP was used to develop a TH 14 West Interregional Corridor Scoping Document (SD) and *Draft* Scoping Decision Document (SDD).

- The **Scoping Document** outlines the TH 14 West: North Mankato to New Ulm project, its purpose and need, the schedule, project cost and funding sources, and describes the potential alternatives and the key issues to be evaluated in the EIS. It identifies the potential for social, economic, and environmental impacts; and discusses public and agency involvement, including permits and approvals likely to be necessary for the project.
- The ***Draft* SDD** recommends which project alternatives should be carried forward for further review and which areas of social/economic/environmental impacts should be subjected to further analysis in the future EIS.

The Scoping Document/*Draft* SDD was circulated to the required federal and state distribution lists and made available to the public for review and comment. A 30-day comment period began on March 31, 2003 and closed on Friday, May 2, 2003.

**Scoping Hearings/Comments** - Two Scoping Hearings, an Interagency Hearing (2:00 to 3:30 PM) and a Public Hearing (4:30 to 7:00 PM), were held on Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at the Courtland Community Center, 200 Railroad Street, Courtland, Minnesota to provide an opportunity for involved agencies and the public to comment on the project. Over 100 people attended the Hearings, including representatives from Nicollet County; Brown County; the Cities of New Ulm, Courtland, Nicollet, and North Mankato; Courtland Township; Nicollet Township; the Region 9 Development Commission; and residents and businesses in the project corridor.

Mn/DOT received 33 comments on the Scoping Document from seven agencies, one business, and 25 residents.

***OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS***

***Agency Comments:***

- In general, the agencies had few, if any, comments on the scope of the project and encouraged continuing coordination during the DEIS process.
- Nicollet County suggested including the intersection of CSAH 6/TH 14 in the project.
- The Cities support the Courtland North Bypass #1 and Nicollet South Bypass #1.
- There was no agency opposition to the retained four-lane design.
- No agency opposed the retained location alternatives.

***Business Comment:***

The key issue noted by the one business included:

- Concern that maintenance projects already planned would slow down or reduce the need for the construction of this project.
- No business opposed the four-lane design.
- No business opposed the retained location alternatives.

***Resident Comments:***

Key issues by residents included:

- There were seven people supporting the Nicollet South Bypass #1 and three people against the Nicollet South Bypass #2.
- Three people supported the Courtland North Bypass #1.
- Three responses supported the four-lane design with no one opposing it.
- Ten residents were concerned about severed, triangulated, or isolated farmland impacts with the bypass alternatives. Suggestions included following the property and parcel lines rather than cutting through farmlands diagonally.

**Scoping Decision Document** - A Scoping Decision Document was prepared by Mn/DOT to complete the Scoping process. It documents which alternatives were selected for evaluation

in the future EIS as well as the social, economic, and environmental impacts that will need in-depth study.

## 6.1.2 Alternatives Dismissed and Retained

The Universe of Alternatives described in Chapter 5 of this CMP was taken through the Scoping Process. Chapter 5 includes an assessment of how each alternative addresses the purpose and need for the project, as well as an overview of some of the social, economic, and environmental issues associated with each alternative. Both roadway design and location alternatives were evaluated. As documented in the Scoping Decision Document, the alternatives dismissed and the alternatives retained for further analysis in the future EIS are listed below:

**ALTERNATIVES DISMISSED FROM FURTHER REVIEW**

The following project alternatives from the Scoping Document will not be evaluated in the EIS and will be dropped from further consideration:

**Design Alternatives:**

***Two-lane Rural Design***
This design alternative does not address the primary deficiencies (safety and traffic operations) along the TH 14 roadway. The two-lane design alternative is not consistent with Mn/DOT's long-range objectives relative to mobility and safety for the corridor, does not meet the purpose and need for a future project, and is *dismissed from further study*.

**Location Alternatives:**

***Segment 1:***

- Hwy 21 Alignment
  This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because of:
  - Substantial impacts to farmland, wetlands/public waters, and portions of the Swan Lake WMA.
  - Existing residential access along the existing Highway 21 corridor would require additional improvements including frontage roads, access relocation and/or access closures.
  - Poor connectivity with CSAH 37.
  - Introduces roadway-related impacts to new area.
  - Expanding the capacity of the roadway from two to four lanes on the existing alignment will create a substantial amount of right-of-way impacts to existing structures especially where the alignment is close to farmsteads.
  - Inconsistent with community qualities (agricultural preservation, zoning, and highway turnbacks).

- Courtland/Hilltop Alignment
  This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because it:

- Requires a large amount of right-of-way acquisition in undeveloped areas.
- Inconsistent with County land use policy for agricultural land preservation.
- Has poor connectivity with CSAH 37.
- Inconsistent with community qualities (agricultural preservation, zoning, and highway turnbacks).

***Segment 2:***

- Hwy 21 Alignment

  This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because:
  - The existing residential access along the existing CSAH 21 corridor would require an access management plan (frontage roads) to be in place to meet IRC access goals.
  - The City of Courtland does not support this alternative because it is located too far from the City most likely resulting in negative impacts to its economic development.
  - Substantial impacts to farmland, wetlands/public waters, and portions of the Swan Lake WMA.
  - Route is circuitous, adding an additional mile to the alignment.
  - Expanding the capacity of the roadway from two to four lanes on the existing alignment will create a substantial amount of right-of-way impacts to existing structures especially where the alignment is close to buildings and farmsteads.
  - Inconsistent with community qualities (agricultural preservation, zoning, and highway turnbacks).

- Courtland Southern Bypass

  This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because:
  - Not consistent with community Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
  - Requires the greatest amount of right-of-way acquisition in the urban area. Right-of-way impacts may eliminate existing residential/industrial development.
  - Potential for bluff impacts high.
  - Potential for noise impacts due to proximity to residential area.
  - Divides residential housing on the south from the City's commercial/retail area.
  - Requires the greatest amount of right-of-way acquisition.
  - Erosion concerns due to the proximity of ridge.
  - Aesthetic issues for nearby residents with river valley views.
  - Potential wetland impacts.
  - Inconsistent with community qualities.

***Segment 3:***

- Nicollet Northern Bypass

  This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because:
  - Not consistent with community plans (agricultural preservation and zoning).
  - Requires the largest amount of right-of-way acquisition in undeveloped areas.
  - Economic development-moves corridor away from current commercial/retail area.
  - Longer travel distance than southern bypass alternatives.

- Inconsistent with County land use policy for agricultural land preservation.
- Potential for noise impacts to residents.
- Likely wetland impacts.
- Potential water quality concerns because of proximity to lakes and wetlands.

➢ Courtland-Nicollet Southern Bypass Connection

This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because:

- Requires a large amount of right-of-way acquisition in undeveloped areas.
- Not consistent with Nicollet County Zoning Ordinance and land use policy.
- Wetland and farmland impacts.
- Improvements would also need to be made to connect the corridor with TH 111 as required by the Constitutional Trunk Highway Routes.

➢ Hwy 25 Alignment

This alternative is *dismissed from further study* because:

- Existing residential access along the existing Highway 25 corridor would require an access management plan to be in place to meet IRC access goals.
- Right-of-way acquisition impacts to existing development along the roadway.
- Potential impacts to three cemeteries along CSAH 25.
- Increased farmland impacts.
- Potential wetland impacts.
- Additional watercourse crossings.
- Improvements would also need to be made to connect the corridor with TH 111 as required by the Constitutional Trunk Highway Routes.

***Other:***

➢ Hwy 68 Alignment

This alternative is *dismissed from further study* for a number of reasons, including:

- Would not address any documented TH 14 deficiencies.
- Currently, TH 68 is not the route of choice for east-west movements in the area. Traffic volumes on TH 68 are 60 to 70 percent lower than on TH 14.
- Widening of TH 68 would risk impacts to wetlands, public waters, and rare, threatened & endangered species.
- Potential impacts to the State park land at the eastern end of the corridor.
- Expansion of TH 68 is not consistent with any local land use plans. The distance of the corridor from the Cities of Nicollet and Courtland would limit their potential for commercial development and economic growth.
- TH 68 would require a large amount of cut and fill because of the geography of the area.
- Improvements would also need to be made to connect the corridor with TH 111 as required by the Constitutional Trunk Highway Routes.

## ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR FURTHER REVIEW

### No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no changes to the transportation facilities would occur beyond already committed projects. Any improvements would be limited to regular pavement maintenance and minor transportation system management improvements. None of the safety issues or roadway design deficiencies would be addressed, and the future traffic would cause increased congestion and decreased mobility and safety for the roadway users. Committed projects for this section of TH 14 include an overlay of TH 14 from TH 15 to Nicollet, and minor safety improvements at the intersections of TH 14/TH 15 and at TH 14/CSAH 37. The No-Build Alternative will be retained throughout the EIS analysis process and will serve as a baseline for comparison of the Build Alternatives.

### Build Alternatives

***Design Alternatives:***
The Scoping Decision Document listed the four-lane Design Alternatives be ***retained for further analysis in the EIS*** because they are the most consistent with the purpose and need for the project **(Figure 6.1-1)**.

- Four-Lane Urban
- Four-lane Rural

***Location Alternatives:***
The Scoping Decision Document listed the following location alternatives (**Figure 6.1-2**) be ***retained for further analysis in the EIS*** for comparison purposes and/or because they most closely meet the purpose and need for the project, including:

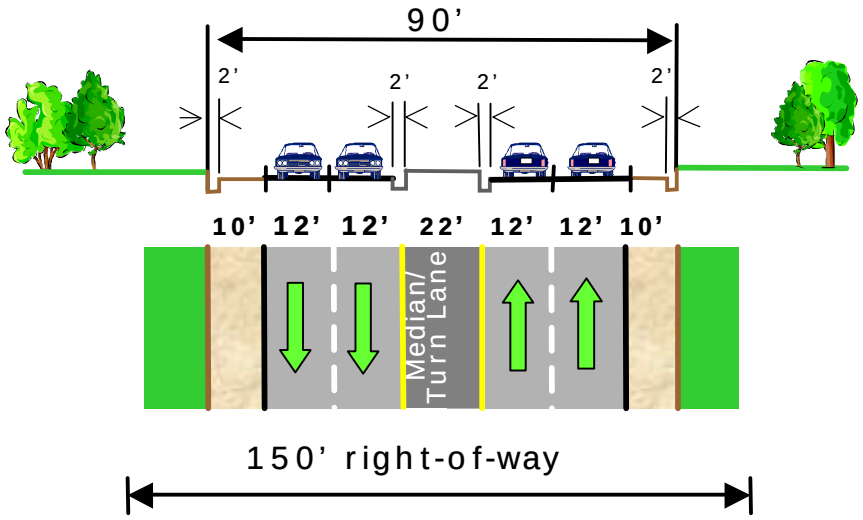
- Reduce crashes and increase capacity by expanding to four lanes.
- Consistent with local land use planning.
- Consistent with Mn/DOT Interregional Corridor plans.

*Segment 1:*
- Existing Alignment
- River Valley Alignment
- Hwy 14/15 Top of Bluff Alignment
- Hwy 14/15/37 Top of Bluff Alignment
- Courtland Top of Bluff Alignment

*Segment 2:*
- Existing Alignment
- Courtland Northern Bypass #1
- Courtland Northern Bypass #2

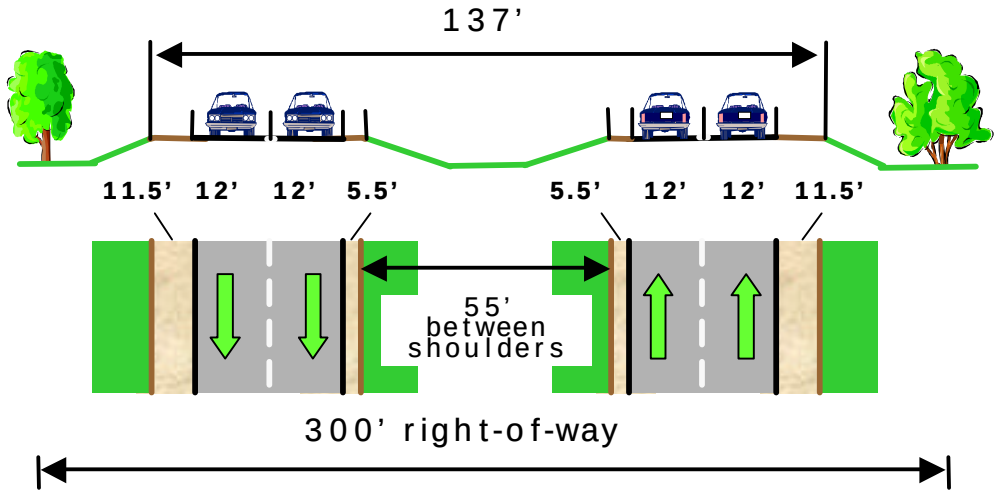
*Segment 3:*
- Existing Alignment
- Nicollet Southern Bypass #1
- Nicollet Southern Bypass #2

## Four-lane Urban Roadway




**Carried Forward**

## Four-Lane Rural Roadway



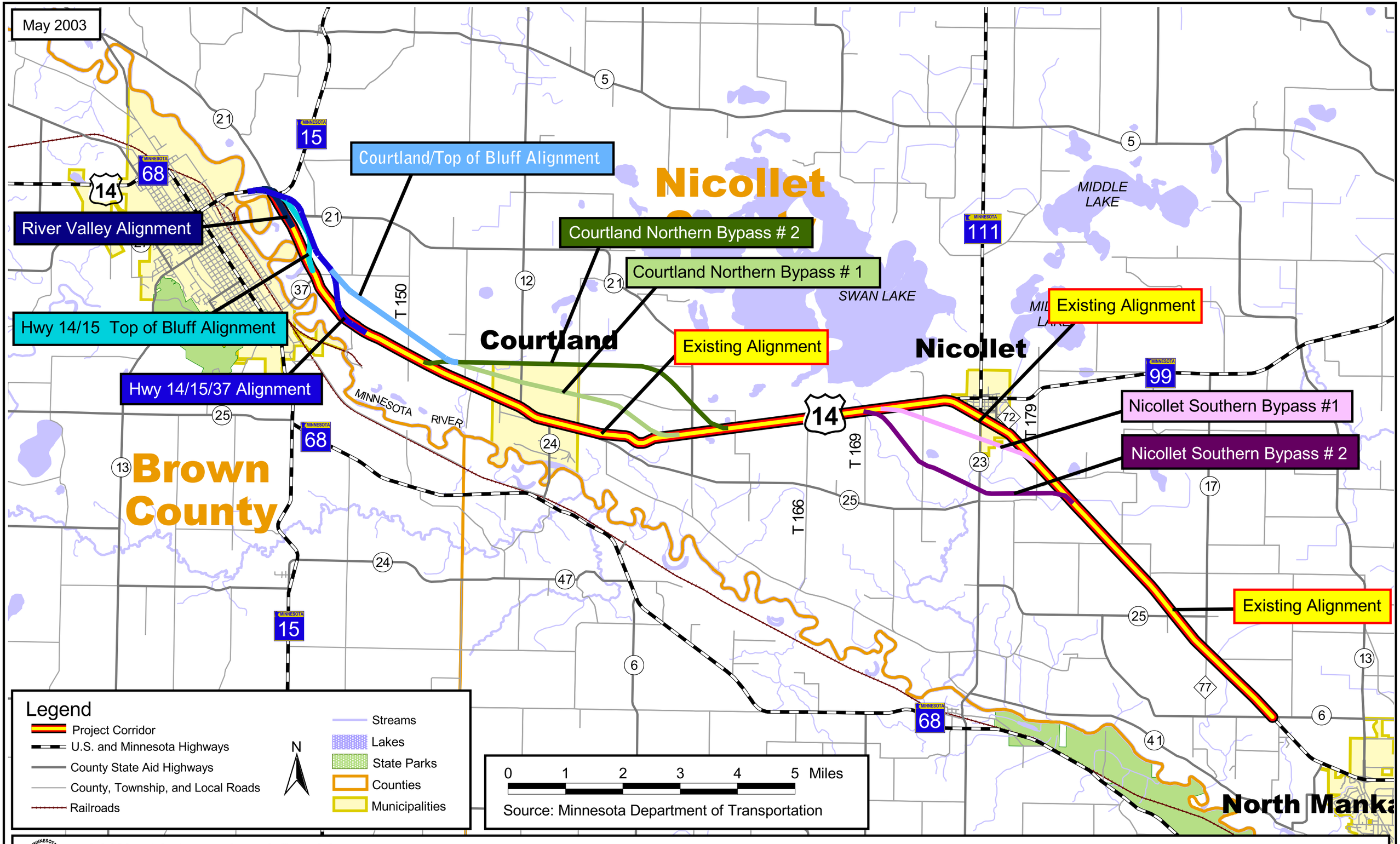

**Carried Forward**

**TH 14 West Interregional Corridor:**
North Mankato to New Ulm

Not to scale

**Figure 6.1-1**
**Design Alternatives Retained for Further Analysis in the EIS**

Last updated:6/23/2003




**14 West Interregional Corridor:**
North Mankato to New Ulm

**Figure 6.1-2**
**Location Alternatives Retained for Further Review**

## 6.1.3 Schedule

The Scoping process has been a part of finalizing the TH 14 West Corridor Management Plan. By folding the Scoping Decision into the CMP, Mn/DOT will be prepared to move forward with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as soon as funding is received. The schedule for the completion of the Scoping process and the Corridor Management Plan is identified below, although the dates for the future EIS process are tentative at this time.

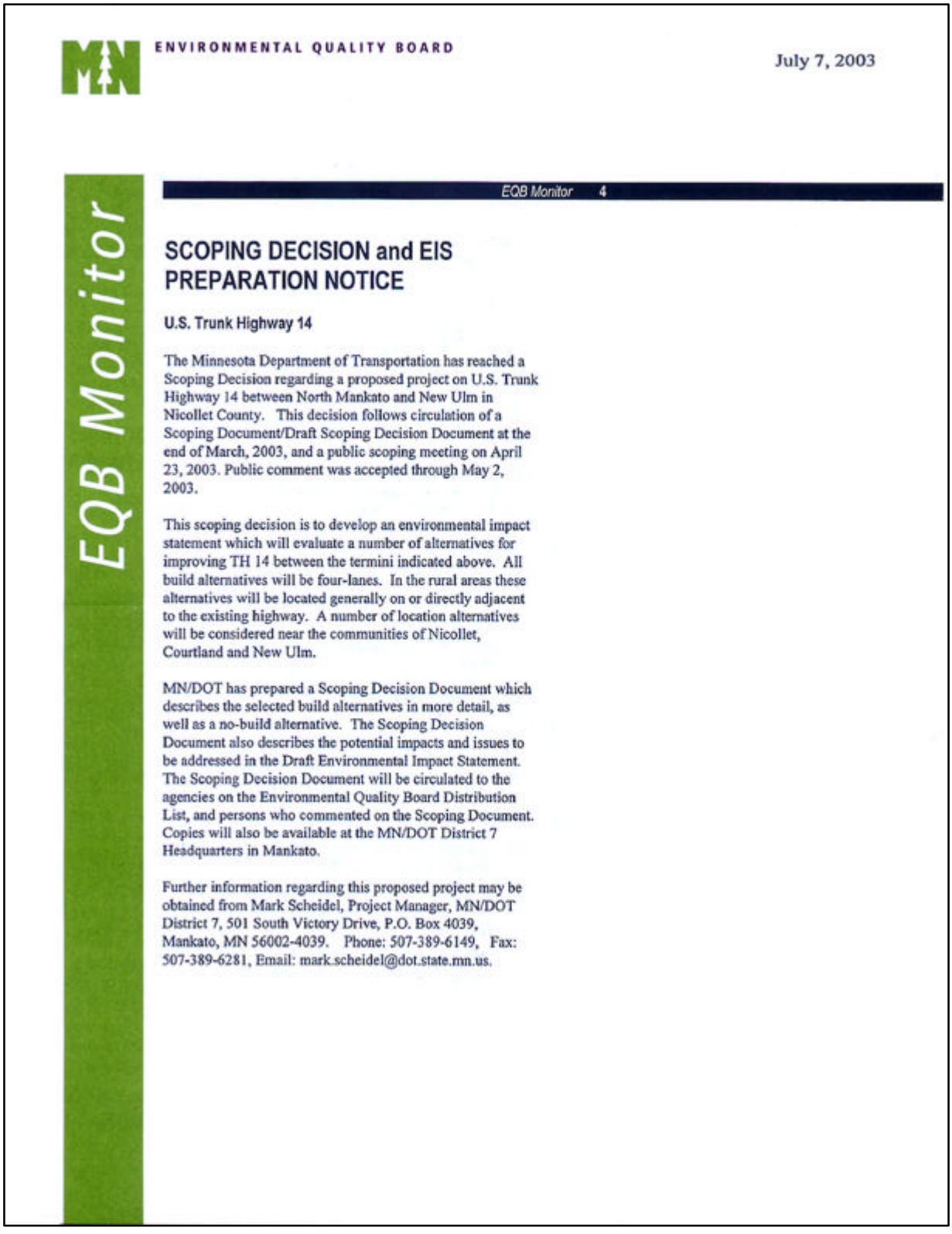
| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| Notice of Availability of Scoping Document and Scoping Meetings in *EQB Monitor* | March 31, 2003 |
| Interagency Scoping Meeting | April 23, 2003 |
| Public Scoping Meeting | April 23, 2003 |
| Scoping Comment Period Closes | May 2, 2003 |
| Scoping Decision Document | June 2003 |
| Final Corridor Management Plan | June 2003 |
| Notice of Intent to Prepare EIS in Federal Register | June 5, 2003 |
| State EIS preparation Notice | July 7, 2003 |
| Draft EIS Distribution/Notice of Availability | June 2004 |
| Public Hearing on Draft EIS | July 2004 |
| Final EIS Review Period | Fall 2004 |
| FHWA Record of Decision | Fall 2004 |
| Adequacy Decision | Late Fall 2004 |
| Study Report | Summer 2005 |
| Detail Design | TBD |
| Right-of-Way Acquisition | TBD |
| Contract Letting – Roadway and Bridge | TBD |

Source: 14 West Interregional Corridor Scoping Document – North Mankato to New Ulm

The announcement of the Scoping Decision and the intent to prepare an EIS was in the July 7, 2003 *EQB Monitor* (**Figure 6.1-3**).

The HPDP process followed by Mn/DOT takes many years to complete starting with system planning at a conceptual level and going through construction. Once the Scoping Decision is made and the Corridor Management Plan is finalized, this phase of the TH 14 West project is completed. The next steps in the process include Preliminary Design/Environmental Impact Statement; Detail Design and Right-of-Way Acquisition; followed by construction and operation. See **Figure 6.1-4.**

**Figure 6.1-3**
***EQB Monitor* Announcement of Scoping Decision/Intent to Prepare EIS.**



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

July 7, 2003

EQB Monitor



## SCOPING DECISION and EIS PREPARATION NOTICE

**U.S. Trunk Highway 14**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has reached a Scoping Decision regarding a proposed project on U.S. Trunk Highway 14 between North Mankato and New Ulm in Nicollet County. This decision follows circulation of a Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document at the end of March, 2003, and a public scoping meeting on April 23, 2003. Public comment was accepted through May 2, 2003.

This scoping decision is to develop an environmental impact statement which will evaluate a number of alternatives for improving TH 14 between the termini indicated above. All build alternatives will be four-lanes. In the rural areas these alternatives will be located generally on or directly adjacent to the existing highway. A number of location alternatives will be considered near the communities of Nicollet, Courtland and New Ulm.

MN/DOT has prepared a Scoping Decision Document which describes the selected build alternatives in more detail, as well as a no-build alternative. The Scoping Decision Document also describes the potential impacts and issues to be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Scoping Decision Document will be circulated to the agencies on the Environmental Quality Board Distribution List, and persons who commented on the Scoping Document. Copies will also be available at the MN/DOT District 7 Headquarters in Mankato.

Further information regarding this proposed project may be obtained from Mark Scheidel, Project Manager, MN/DOT District 7, 501 South Victory Drive, P.O. Box 4039, Mankato, MN 56002-4039. Phone: 507-389-6149, Fax: 507-389-6281, Email: mark.scheidel@dot.state.mn.us.

# HIGHWAY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Construction & Operation

Detail Design & Right-of-Way Acquisition

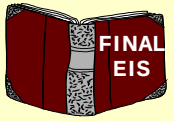
## Preliminary Design & Environmental Study


**Geometric Layout**

**Prepare Draft EIS**

**Draft EIS Public Meeting**

**Public Review & Comment**

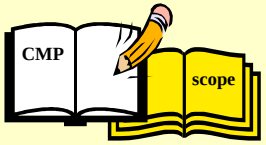



**Final EIS**


**Record of Decision (ROD)**

## 14 West Interregional Corridor

### Corridor Management Plan & Scoping Decision




**Prepare Draft Corridor Management Plan (CMP) & Scoping Document**


**Notice of Intent (NOI)**

**Public Scoping Meeting**


**Scoping Decision Document**


**Corridor Management Plan**

We are here

## 6.2 PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECTS

This Corridor Management Plan provides the foundation for a comprehensive transportation system that will serve the anticipated needs of corridor travelers, residents and businesses over the next 20 years. As documented in previous chapters of this CMP, there are numerous deficiencies in the existing transportation system as well as those anticipated by 2025. The Scoping Decision Document identifies the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS that address those deficiencies. Since funding availability may not allow the whole 22-mile corridor to be constructed at once, a prioritized implementation strategy has been developed. The segments with the greatest transportation needs would be addressed first as funding becomes available.

### 6.2.1 Recommended Prioritization of Alternatives

***Priority #1 – Segment 1: TH 14 / TH 15 / CSAH 21 Realignment***

This segment of TH 14 has the highest number of existing and future deficiencies, including but not limited to operational, safety, and mobility deficiencies. The intersection of TH 14 / TH 15 / CSAH 21 is the highest priority within the study area due to the high number and severity of crashes. This intersection has a crash rate that is 40% higher than Mn/DOT's goal for intersections on the IRC system and is the highest intersection crash rate of any along the corridor. In addition, the severity rate at this intersection is over four times the expected severity rate. All four fatalities and nearly 70 percent of the injuries for the 22-mile corridor occurred at this intersection. As traffic volumes increase, the level of operation at this intersection is expected to decline, and the probability of traffic signal installation will increase. Mobility objectives of above 55 mph will not be met along this segment with the existing two-lane design and the recommended interim intersection improvements.

This suggests the potential strategies for this area include expanding to a four-lane divided roadway on the existing or new TH 14 alignment as listed in the alternatives retained for Segment 1. The preferred alignment for this segment will be determined during the EIS process.

***Priority #2 – City of Courtland***

The existing TH 14 Corridor is located in the core of the City of Courtland, dividing the residential development to the north from the commercial and industrial uses on the south. Speed limits though the city do not meet the mobility goals for the corridor. The high incidence of sideswipe and rear end crashes within the city reflects the multiple purposes of roadway users: a mix of motorists traveling through the city desiring mobility and local users desiring access. Noise pollution created by the high percentage of heavy truck traffic (about 15 % of total traffic) reduces the quality of life for the residents living along the corridor. In addition, high vehicle volumes through the city (expected to increase to 10,400 vehicles per day by Year 2025) discourage safe pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The potential strategies for this area include expanding to a four-lane divided roadway on existing or new bypass alignment as a four-lane urban or rural section. It should be noted

that construction of this alternative as a four-lane facility could function as a passing lane to mitigate the limited passing opportunities between New Ulm and Courtland.

***Priority #3 – City of Nicollet***

This segment of TH 14 currently is not meeting the safety, mobility, or access objectives for the Corridor. About 65 percent of crashes that occurred on TH 14 within the City of Nicollet were at the intersection of TH 14 / TH 111 /CSAH 23. Current and future traffic volumes within this segment are the highest within the study area, and cannot be accommodated based on the above 55 mph mobility objective for the corridor.

Potential strategies for this area are to expand to a four-lane divided roadway on existing or new bypass alignment as a four-lane urban or rural section.

***Priority #4 –Rural Segments***

Rural segments have the least amount of need along the TH 14 Corridor, but it should be noted that no segments within the Corridor meet all measures defined within this study. The increase in traffic volumes is expected to impact traffic operations along the entire length of the Corridor. In addition, limited no passing zones between New Ulm and Nicollet impact existing and future vehicular mobility.

If the Rural Segments cannot be completed at once, they could be addressed in the order of the least amount of available passing, as follows:

- TH 14 / TH 15 / CSAH 21 Realignment to the City of Courtland
- City of Nicollet to CSAH 6
- City of Courtland to the City of Nicollet

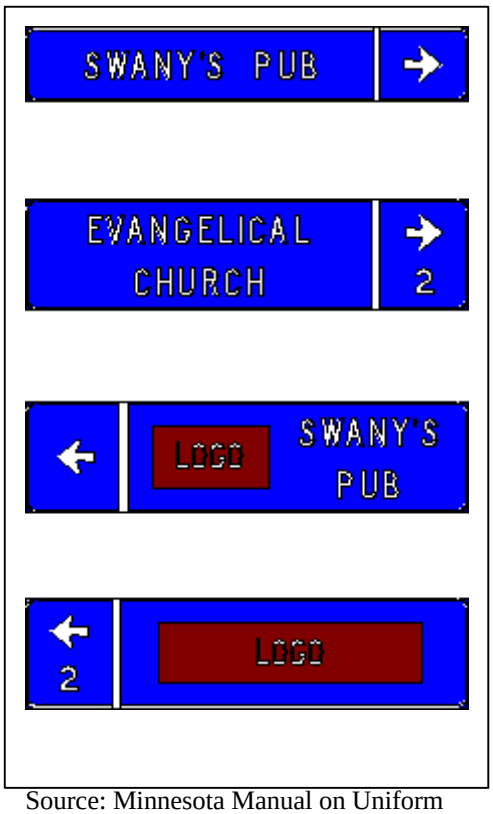
## 6.2.2 Jurisdictional Roadway Changes

Historically, when Mn/DOT has made alignment changes to Trunk Highways, the existing (or old) highway alignment is kept largely intact (usually to provide access to existing commercial development, farms and homes). Mn/DOT turns responsibility for maintenance and roadway jurisdiction to local agencies. This arrangement is usually mutually beneficial, as Mn/DOT does not have to maintain two parallel roadways, and the local agencies can take advantage of a former highway as part of their local road system. This arrangement is usually referred to as a "Turnback" by Mn/DOT (referring that the roadway is given back to the local agencies). A "Turnback" is also usually accompanied by a change in the functional classification of the existing highway alignment. Turnback routes usually become minor arterials or collectors (based on continuity, designation as a local street is not common – except in isolated areas).

If new alignments are selected for TH 14 to bypass the Cities of Courtland and Nicollet, the existing alignment through the Cities would be eligible for turnback to Nicollet County. These segments of roadway are approximately two to five miles long depending upon the bypass location.

The use of Specific Service Signs should be considered to reduce the impact of the bypass on businesses that depend on drive-by customers. Examples of Specific Service Signs are shown on **Figure 6.2-1**.

**Figure 6.2-1**
**Specific Service Signage**




Source: Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2001)

The top of the bluff realignments of TH 14 would also include the existing TH 14 alignment that would be eligible for turnback. These segments are approximately one to six miles long, depending on the bypass location.

Since "old" TH 14 would no longer be a continuous route, its designation as a principal arterial would be changed to a collector or local roadway.

### 6.2.3 Cooperative Agreements

The responsibility for providing a highway that can adequately meet the transportation needs of the corridor is not only dependent on Mn/DOT, but also on State and local units of government. Although Mn/DOT does have jurisdiction over the highway, the addition of capacity – or especially realignment – must be a cooperative agreement.

Through these agreements, the State usually agrees to pursue a specific improvement project if the local units of government agree to do what is in their authority such as preserving right-of-way, providing better local street connections, and managing access from locally approved development/redevelopment projects.

The basic goal of cooperative agreements is to provide a strategy for transportation solutions for the corridor. It is recommended that Mn/DOT and local units of government keep projects moving forward at a reasonable pace and provide a mechanism for jointly achieving the identified goals for the TH 14 Corridor.

## 6.3 INTERIM MEASURES

There are no major projects for TH 14 for this planning area in the 10 year plan. Given this timeline, this CMP includes a series of short-term or interim measures to address safety deficiencies along the Corridor. Although these measures may not meet the ultimate needs of the corridor, they can be completed with fewer environmental impacts and with lower implementation costs.

Interim Measures are meant to be short-term solutions to larger problems specifically addressing safety and/or operational deficiencies that do not require in-depth environmental

documentation (i.e. EIS). The implementation of any interim measure is not necessarily intended to be the final solution to safety or operations problems, but is meant to have a positive impact from existing conditions. These types of measures are meant to be more easily implemented than larger and more complex projects and would not likely involve a long project development process, extensive right-of-way acquisition, or substantial amounts of construction.

## 6.3.1 Safety Mitigation Projects

### INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

As documented on **Table 4.1-1**, there are three intersections along the TH 14 Corridor that are currently considered deficient from a safety perspective. These intersections should be given the highest priority when addressing safety needs. The general strategies outlined previously can be considered for these intersections; however, the following represent specific interim mitigation strategies for each of the three deficient intersections.

#### *TH 14 / TH 15 / CSAH 21 Intersection*

As noted in Chapter 4, this intersection has the highest crash rate of any along the corridor. It was also viewed as a critical safety concern by local governments and citizens.

In 2001, Mn/DOT's Office of Traffic Engineering completed a Road Safety Audit at this intersection recommending ***construction of a wider free right for vehicles traveling northbound on TH 14/15 to eastbound TH 14***. This project is scheduled for 2003.

#### *TH 14 / CSAH 37 Intersection*

As noted in Chapter 4, the critical crash rate and the severity rate are above the expected for similar Minnesota intersections. Consideration should be given to the following improvements.

- ***Construct a wider free right for vehicles traveling eastbound TH 14 to southbound CSAH 37.***

- ***Remove trees that shade TH 14 during evening hours.*** Even though the trees themselves are not within the sight line, shade created by the trees when the sun is in the western sky causes difficulty in seeing oncoming vehicles. A majority of left-turn crashes off of CSAH 37 occurred during evening hours.

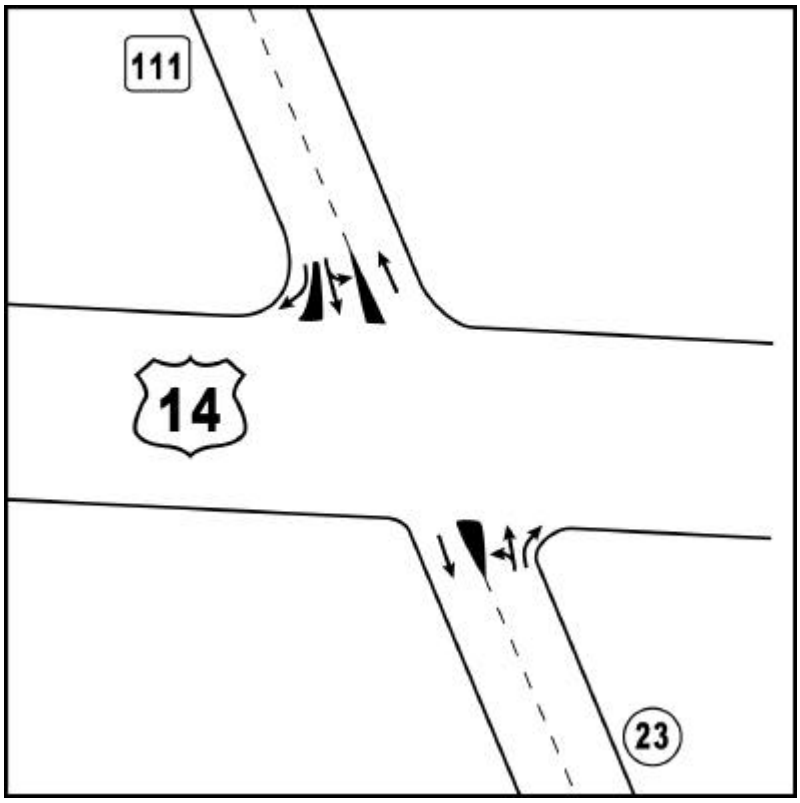
- ***Construct an acceleration lane for vehicles turning east onto TH 14 from CSAH 37.***

**TH 14 / TH 111 / CSAH 23 Intersection**

As noted in Chapter 4, the critical crash rate exceeds Mn/DOT's target IRC rate. The current geometry of this intersection consists of a negative skew angle, making it difficult for motorists to view oncoming traffic on their right side.

***Placement of markings on TH 111 and CSAH 23 are recommended so vehicles enter the intersection at a right angle***, increasing the line of sight. A schematic of this improvement is shown on **Figure 6.3-1**.

**Figure 6.3-1**
**TH 14 / TH 111 / CSAH 23 Intersection Lane Restriping**




Source: Howard R. Green Company

**EDGE LINE RUMBLE STRIPS**

In rural areas, a common mitigation tool used to reduce the incidence of these types of crashes is to install edge line rumble strips. The use of edge line rumble strips in urban areas is typically not as favorable due to the lower frequency and severity of run-off-the-road crashes as well as the noise impact created. Consideration should be given to using Edge Line Rumble Strips in rural areas consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.

**ACCESS SAFETY CONDITIONS**

Access points to highways can involve safety considerations that need to be mitigated. For that reason, Mn/DOT sometimes attaches conditions to access permits that are being approved. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Turn lanes, paved shoulders
- Alteration of the land, such as cutting hills and trees for sightlines
- Regulation on placement of structures and equipment for sightlines
- Special design standards of the road/driveway facilities

Mn/DOT should strictly adhere to the policy of utilizing conditions for safety on the corridor.

## 6.3.2 Corridor Management Strategies

**ACCESS MANAGEMENT**

As noted in **Section 4.1-3**, whenever and wherever land development or re-development occurs, it is important that sound access management principles are employed. That section also covers some specifics of Mn/DOT's new Access Management Guidelines and the importance of the local land use decisions. The following access management section is intended to establish how Mn/DOT will apply access standards and will suggest options for local government participation in access strategies in this TH 14 corridor.

As the road authority for state roads, Mn/DOT directly controls access-related roadway facilities such as signalization and striping. Mn/DOT also controls activities of others located in state highway right-of-way, such as private access and public access, through a permit process. For all new access permits to TH 14 in Nicollet, Courtland and Nicollet County, the following minimum spacing (**Table 6.3-1**) will be required unless a deviation is issued.

**Table 6.3-1 Access Spacing Guidelines Applicable in TH 14 West Corridor**

| Area Character | Primary Intersection | Secondary Intersection | Private Access | Signal Spacing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural (A) | 1 mile | ½ mile | Exception or Deviation Only | Deviation Only Strongly discouraged |
| Urbanizing (B) | ½ mile | ¼ mile | Exception or Deviation Only | Deviation Only Strongly discouraged |
| Urban Core (C) | 300-660 feet | 300-600 feet | Permitted Subject to Conditions | ¼ mile |

NOTE: The rural, urbanizing and urban core segments used above do not correspond to roadway segments used in earlier chapters but are as shown in **Figure 6.3-2**.

June 2003

## Courtland

## Nicollet

Legend

- U.S. and Minnesota Highways
- County State Aid Highways
- County, Township, and Local Roads
- Railroads
- Streams
- Lakes
- State Parks
- Counties
- Municipalities
- Rural (A)
- Urbanizing (B)
- Urban Core (C)

N

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation and Howard R. Green Company

**14 West Interregional Corridor:**
North Mankato to New Ulm

**Figure 6.3-2**
**Access Spacing Guideline Segments**

As Mn/DOT implements the access spacing requirements, the result will be fewer access points than has been traditionally allowed. This means there has to be more supporting local road systems than has been traditionally developed to provide access among local roads without getting onto TH 14. While Mn/DOT regulates *within* the state road right-of-way, communities regulate *outside* of the road right-of-way. Therefore, it will be mostly the communities' role to ensure that the needed local road system coordinates with the TH 14 access points and also provides for travel parallel to TH 14 for local trips. Actually, full implementation will require a partnership, and some change in procedures. Scenarios demonstrating implementation of the access management plan follow.

Courtland and Nicollet

The current land use plan maps for the cities of Courtland and Nicollet depict some future local street connections but there is no language clearly stating that it will be adhered to, plus the cities may want to change the configurations. Each should take the following steps:

- The city and Mn/DOT should develop an access plan that identifies allowable access points and at least the backbone of the supporting local road system.
- The city should update their comprehensive plan and incorporate the access plan into it.
- Mn/DOT should reject access requests that do not follow the plan.
- The city approves of new development only if they include local road provisions that are compatible with the plan. This could be done in two ways:
    1. Adopt zoning regulations that implement the access plan and require needed local roads, as shown in the plan, as a condition of permitting the development.
    2. Have no new access regulations but require platting for all new development, then concurrence with the access plan would be reviewed during each plat review process. This case-by-case implementation may provide the flexibility that is sometimes needed without having to go through a variance process from official regulations.

In the absence of the above scenario with an access plan, the city and Mn/DOT could continue to be in communication on all development inquiries and meet early in the process of each case. There are several possibilities that could follow, including but not limited to:

- Determination that a local road isn't needed and spacing guidelines can be met, so a permit is granted by Mn/DOT.
- Determination that a local road is needed so the community requires it.
- Determination that a local road is needed but there are none reasonably close for extension at this time. An interim access permit by Mn/DOT is granted and the community requires donation of appropriate right-of-way for a future road.

In the absence of an access plan, the city should require platting for all development in order for the city to have review authority for access onto the local roadway system. Otherwise, there is no review process if a Mn/DOT access permit isn't required and zoning is correct for the use.

Nicollet County

Nicollet County's strong agricultural preservation land use policies should continue. This will likely have the effect of few and scattered access requests that could conform to the Mn/DOT access management guidelines. Also, there are county and township roads that serve as a rural supporting road system. For these reasons an access management plan is not necessary. There is a problem area, however, that needs some specific attention.

In the area between Courtland and the TH14/TH15 intersection there are numerous subdivisions that are basically dead ends with access to TH 14. There are no connections between them or to a county or township road. This causes traffic to access TH 14 for short local trips. A possibly bigger problem is the potential for a considerable amount of residential development pressure from lots of record that are somewhat grand fathered in, as they were laid out before the county agricultural preservation measures were in place.

Nicollet County and Mn/DOT should do some planning in this area, so that land use and access management is compatible.

## CORRIDOR PRESERVATION

The first step should be adoption of the CMP by the partners. An EIS should be done next in order to continue through the environmental portion of the highway development process. As part of the EIS process, preferred future highway locations should be identified. Then, Nicollet County, the City of Nicollet, and the City of Courtland would know what land to preserve. They could then amend their land use plans to show the new future highway corridor, and their intention to preserve it from development. Development requests should then be reviewed in connection with the land use plan and, just as rezoning requests, should be denied if in conflict.

Other methods of preserving future corridors that should be continued are the strong agricultural preservation measures in the Nicollet County and the denial of building permits and rezoning when public sewer and water is not readily available in the two cities.

If growth advances too close to the future corridors, thereby causing development pressure, official mapping should be considered. This would protect the corridors in the event that the local governments might be unable to do so through the other methods.