



Transportation District 7

501 S. Victory Dr.  
Mankato, MN 56001-5302

Office Tel: 507/389-6351

Fax: 507/389-6281

July 26, 2005

TO: Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Members and Other Agencies

RE: **Update--**U.S. Highway 14, New Ulm to North Mankato Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Dear PAC Members and Other Agencies:

The development of the U.S. Highway 14 EIS is progressing well but not without its challenges. Since our last PAC meeting in February, we have been working to resolve some important environmental resource issues. In particular, the need for more in-depth investigation of cultural resources (historic architectural or archaeological sites) will require an adjustment to the EIS schedule. As sometimes happens, more complete cultural resource results are needed to ensure that the corridor alternatives proposed for the EIS are all reasonable. While we do not anticipate major changes to the alternatives, additional technical results are needed. In turn, this will require more effort and time.

The following is an anticipated schedule for some of the key remaining steps to develop the EIS:

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting	September-October 2005
Draft EIS	January 2006
Public Hearing	February 2006
Final EIS	Late 2006

While we will complete the EIS as soon as possible, our handling of key regulatory topics such as cultural resources, wetlands, or other environmental factors must be properly balanced with schedule. Now, as these issues become better understood, the schedule for remaining steps is looking more clear. In any event, the above-noted schedule for the EIS will not affect the ultimate expected timeframe for constructing the project. As you may recall, the project is identified in the Mn/DOT long-range plan for beginning construction in the 2015 to 2023 timeframe.

As you can see, we expect the best time for the next PAC meeting to be in September or October, 2005. At that time, we will preview the Draft EIS with the PAC and with regulatory/environmental agencies and will prepare for the Public Hearing. Please feel welcome to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Peter Harff, P.E.  
Mn/DOT Project Manager