



Highway 14 Improvement Project – Owatonna to Dodge Center Newsletter #2

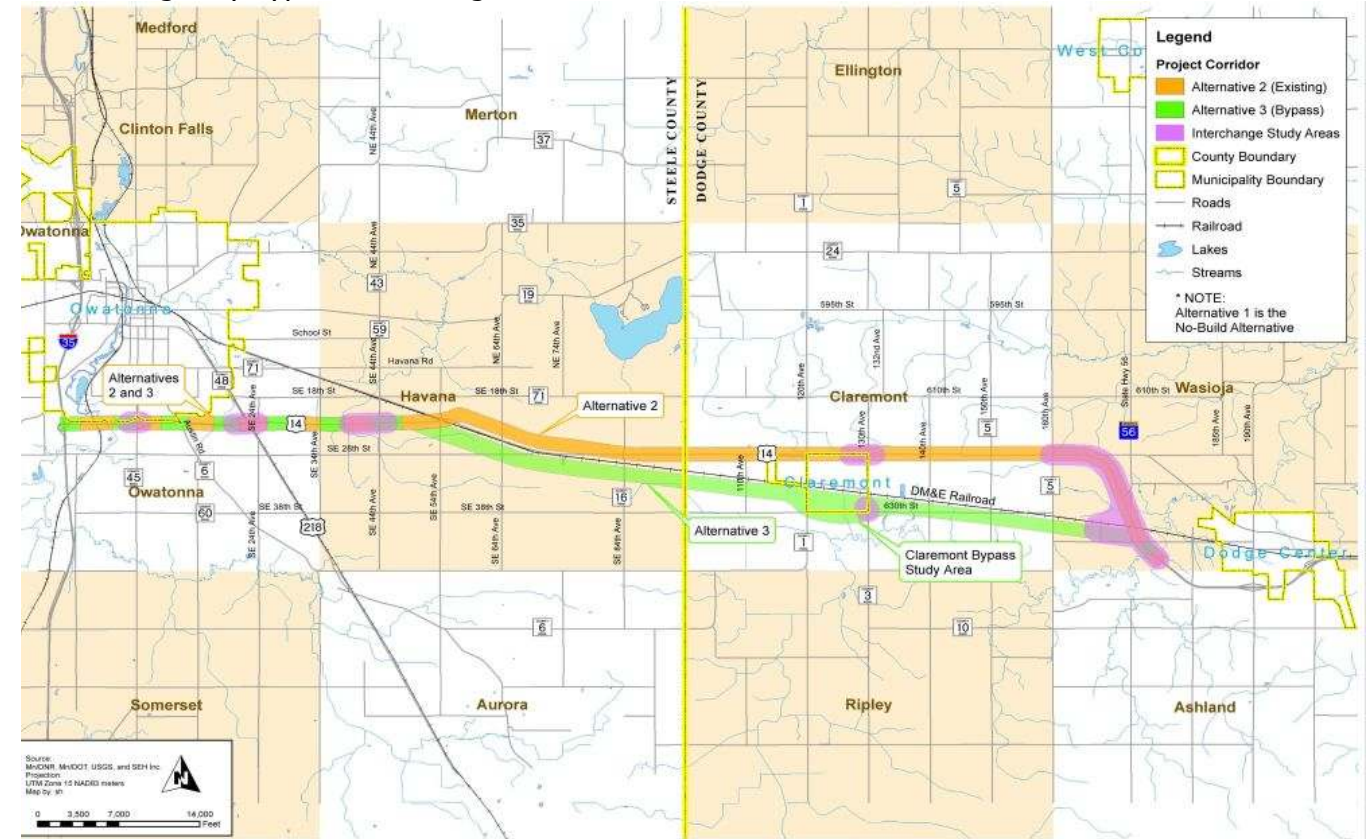


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WHAT IS BEING STUDIED?

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) District 6 Rochester Office, along with its consultant, Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH), is completing preliminary design work and preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential for social, economic, and environmental impacts related with capacity and safety improvements to Highway 14 between Interstate 35 (I-35) in Owatonna to the existing four-lane highway bypass near Dodge Center.



SHORT ELLIOTT HENDRICKSON INC
3535 VADNAIS CENTER DRIVE
ST PAUL MN 55110

Place
Stamp
Here

SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT

On February 20, 2007, Mn/DOT issued the Highway 14 Scoping Decision Document (SDD) for highway improvements between I-35 in Owatonna to the four-lane highway bypass near Dodge Center. The SDD identifies the alternatives to be carried forward and defines the analysis that will be conducted in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The alternatives being considered are illustrated on the map shown above and include the No-Build Alternate (Alternative 1), improving the highway on the existing alignment (Alternative 2), and a southern bypass keeping the roadway south of the DM&E railroad (Alternative 3). A copy of the Highway 14 SDD is available for review at the following locations: Dodge Center, Claremont, and Owatonna City Halls; Dodge County and Steele County Public Works Departments; local libraries, and the Mn/DOT District 6 office in Rochester.





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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING WAS A SUCCESS!

More than 100 people attended the Public Scoping Meeting on December 12, 2006, which was held at the Triton High School in Dodge Center. Attendees had the opportunity to view project area mapping and watch a presentation about the need for the project and the project development process. Numerous verbal and written comments were received. The majority of the comments focused around individual impacts that the project may have on property owners including right-of-way impacts and changes in access.



WHY ARE IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED?

Capacity, safety, and system continuity improvements are necessary along this segment of Highway 14 to accommodate the forecast traffic demands on the highway. The average annual daily traffic (AADT) on Highway 14 is forecast to increase from 7,800 AADT (2005) to 17,000 AADT by 2030 and from 12,100 AADT (2005) to 27,500 AADT by 2030 in the city of Owatonna. Improving travel safety is a priority objective of Mn/DOT in managing the state highway system. During a five-year period (2001-2005), this segment of Highway 14 had 195 reported crashes, and 9 of those involved fatalities. The goal of this project is to provide a roadway that is safe and efficient for all roadway users. The project will also provide system continuity by connecting two previously completed, or soon to be completed, sections of four-lane freeway. Transportation improvements will also help foster economic development along the corridor and throughout the region.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?

The next step in the project development process is to prepare an EIS for the viable alternatives identified in the SDD. An EIS is a full disclosure document that identifies the anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts from a proposed project. The Highway 14 EIS will be written in two phases: the Draft EIS and Final EIS. The Draft EIS summarizes the results of all analysis, studies, consultations, and coordination conducted regarding the potential impacts of the alternatives. A preferred alternative will be selected from the alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative, based on the analysis presented in the Draft EIS. The Final EIS further evaluates the preferred alternative and describes mitigation commitments for anticipated impacts.



PROJECT SCHEDULE

The project schedule listed below is anticipated only. The actual duration of the environmental review for the project will depend largely on the number of alternatives evaluated and the number of environmentally sensitive areas identified during the process. No funding for construction has been identified at this time. A summary of the schedule is as follows:



Scoping Decision Document	March 2007
Complete Draft EIS	2007
Complete Final EIS and Design	2008
Construction	Not Funded

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Get Involved, Stay Involved!

We encourage your participation and questions throughout the project development process. This project will rely heavily on public involvement, including a project homepage on the web at, www.dot.state.mn.us/d6/projects/hwy14, public open houses, and a series of project newsletters.

Next Public Meeting

We encourage you to attend and offer your input at the Open House Meeting scheduled on **Thursday, April 19, 2007, from 6 to 8 p.m.** **The meeting will be held at Triton High School located at 813 West Highway Street in Dodge Center.** The format of the meeting will be an open house, with no formal presentation. The purpose of the meeting is to present preliminary concepts for reconstructing Highway 14 between I-35 in Owatonna to the four-lane bypass near Dodge Center. Both Alternative 2 (existing alignment) and Alternative 3 (bypass alignment) will be presented. The intent of the meeting is not to select a preferred alternative, but rather to receive input that will be used to modify the alternatives before they are assessed for social, economic, and environmental impacts in the Draft EIS. Mn/DOT District 6 staff, along with their consultant, SEH, will be available to answer questions and receive your comments and input.



A PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

The Highway 14 PAC has met five times to discuss the proposed project including most recently too review potential interchange locations for each of the alternatives being considered in the EIS. The PAC was formed at the onset of the project development process to provide two-way communication between the local units of government and the constituents they represent. The PAC members will include the following individuals:

- Dodge County – Guy Kohlhofer, Don Gray
- City of Dodge Center – Lee Mattson, Bill Ketchum
- City of Owatonna – Jeff Johnson, Tom Kuntz
- Wasioja Township – Larry Scherger, Robert Scherger
- Owatonna Township – Glen Nelson, Jerry Katzong
- State Representative Dist 29A – Randy Demmer
- Steele County – Tom Shea, Gary Bruggeman
- City of Claremont – Scott Jensen
- Claremont Township – Paul Weber, Mark Hodgman
- Havana Township – Scott Arndt, Roger Carroll, Brian Schmidt
- Senator Dick Day's Office – Chris Johnson
- Mn/DOT – Richard Augustin, Greg Paulson, Mike Kempinger

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Individuals interested in obtaining additional information are encouraged to visit the project web site at www.dot.state.mn.us/d6/projects/hwy14 or by contacting the following person:

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