



U.S. HIGHWAY 14 CORRIDOR STUDY

NEW ULM TO NORTH MANKATO

PAC MEETING NOTES

February 2, 2005
2:00 to 4:00 PM

Attendees: Wayne Stevens – Brown County Engineer, Colleen Landkamer, Blue Earth County Commissioner, Paul Engel – Nicollet County Commissioner, Mike Wagner – Nicollet County Engineer, Tina Rosenstein – Nicollet County Environmental Services Director, Bob Schabert, Courtland Mayor, Dan Wietecha – Courtland/Nicollet City Administrator, Joel Albrecht – New Ulm Mayor, Steve Koehler – New Ulm City Engineer, Tom Zellmer – Belgrade Township, Wes Judkins – Region 9 Development Planner, Rebecca Arndt – Mn/DOT, Greg Ous – Mn/DOT, Peter Harff – Mn/DOT, Doug Abere – CH2M Hill, Jon Huseby – Bolton & Menk, Gina Mitchell – Bolton & Menk

Meeting Handouts: Slide Handouts, Draft Table S-1 – Environmental Impact Summary, Exhibit 2-1 – Draft EIS Alternatives, and Aerial Photo Exhibit (Plates 1 – 4).

Item #1 – Introductions/Opening Remarks

Discussion: PAC Members were thanked for their ongoing participation and the value of their contributions to the project.

Action: None.

Item #2 – Project Overview and Current Work Highlights

Discussion: A summary of the work completed in 2004 and progress made to date was presented to the PAC, which included open houses (4 informal and 1 formal), workshops for resource agencies and interchange concepts, PAC meetings (2), alternative screening recommendations, and composing text for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The next steps in the DEIS process were outlined, with the final goal of receiving a Record of Decision that will identify the alternative selected.

PAC Members were notified that the project scope has broadened to include the bridge into New Ulm, because comments were received from agencies regarding a future 4-lane roadway dumping traffic onto a 2-lane bridge. The western project limit will now be Front Street in New Ulm. This will require an amendment to the Scoping Document, which will be completed in the Spring of 2005.

Corridor alternatives that will be studied in detail were reviewed. It was explained it is Mn/DOT's goal to eliminate private access and limit public road access to US 14. Property access will be provided from local roads. Right-in-right-out access for private properties will only be considered as a last resort.

County Road (CR) 21's access to US 14/MN 15 was discussed. It was agreed that a meeting between Nicollet County, Mn/DOT, and CH2M Hill should occur in the near future to review CR 21 and interchange concepts for the area.

The advantages and disadvantages were reviewed for each alternative. It was stated that Alternative W1 – Existing US 14 / Minnesota River has more potential for the presence of cultural and archeological resources than W2 – Top of Bluff. Disadvantages to W1 also include Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School's traffic and truck traffic from the quartzite quarry. It was noted that W2's listed advantage of CR 21 having potentially better local road continuity may not be important, because not much traffic comes from west of MN 15 on CR 21 to go east on CR 21.

The City of Nicollet's preference on alignments and impacts were discussed. It was stated that the Hewitt Lifts & Roll-a-Dock operation supports the near bypass, but would like as much room for expansion as possible and prefer the interchange to be located at MN 99. Interchange locations at CR 23 and MN 99 were discussed. It was stated that traffic going north out of Nicollet on MN 111 is higher than traffic going east out of the City on MN 99. It was noted the Aerial Photo Exhibit needs to be revised to reflect the correct location for the ditch north of US 14 and next to CR 72 (correct ditch location is along the east side of CR 72).

Action:

1. CH2M Hill to conduct a meeting with Nicollet County and Mn/DOT to discuss CR 21 continuity and US 14/MN 15 interchange options.
2. CH2M Hill to revise the Aerial Photo Exhibit to reflect the correct location for the ditch.

Item #3 – Proposed Public Involvement & Other Activities

Discussion: Informal public open house meetings are planned for April of 2005. The focus of these meetings is to provide the public an opportunity to preview the DEIS content and the impacts associated with the different alternatives. It was suggested that the meetings should be held in New Ulm and Nicollet, as most issues have been worked out in Courtland. The formal public hearing is expected to be held in late Summer or Fall of 2005. It was suggested that harvest time be avoided.

Action:

1. Bolton & Menk will schedule open house meetings in New Ulm and Nicollet for April 2005.
2. Bolton & Menk will schedule a public hearing in late Summer or Fall of 2005.

Item #4 – Other

Discussion: It was discussed whether PAC Members desired to receive the complete DEIS or a summary. It was decided that a summary and supporting information on key resources or issues would be provided to Members

Action: None.

Item #5 – Next PAC Meeting

Discussion: The next PAC meeting will be held in the Summer of 2005 to preview the DEIS. A notice of the meeting and summary DEIS information will be sent to PAC Members.

Action:

1. Bolton & Menk will send meeting notices and summary DEIS information to PAC Members.