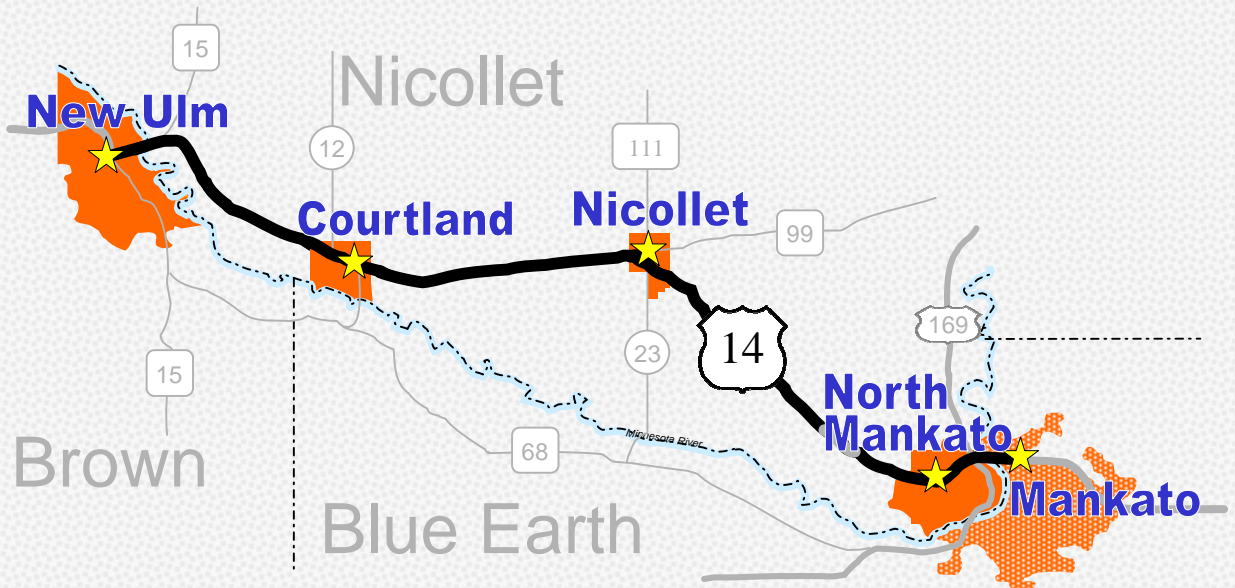


14 West Interregional Corridor



North Mankato to New Ulm

March 2003

SCOPING DOCUMENT DRAFT SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT

TRUNK HIGHWAY 14: NORTH MANKATO TO NEW ULM

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

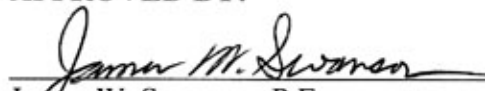
Trunk Highway Number: TH 14
State Project Number:
S.P. XXXX-XX – Roadway Reconstruction

The project is approximately 22 miles long and is located in Nicollet County, Minnesota from State Highway 15, just east of New Ulm, to County Road 6 near North Mankato. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) has identified high crash rates along the corridor and at three intersections, lack of passing zones, high percentage of truck traffic, and future levels of congestion, all indicating a need to improve the roadway. Therefore, Mn/DOT is proposing to address safety, operations, and geometric issues by reconstructing this section of TH 14.

The following person may be contacted for additional information on this document:

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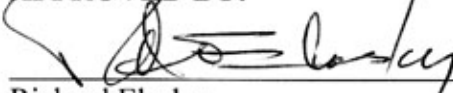
APPROVED BY:



James W. Swanson, P.E.
Transportation District Engineer

3/17/03
Date Approved

APPROVED BY:



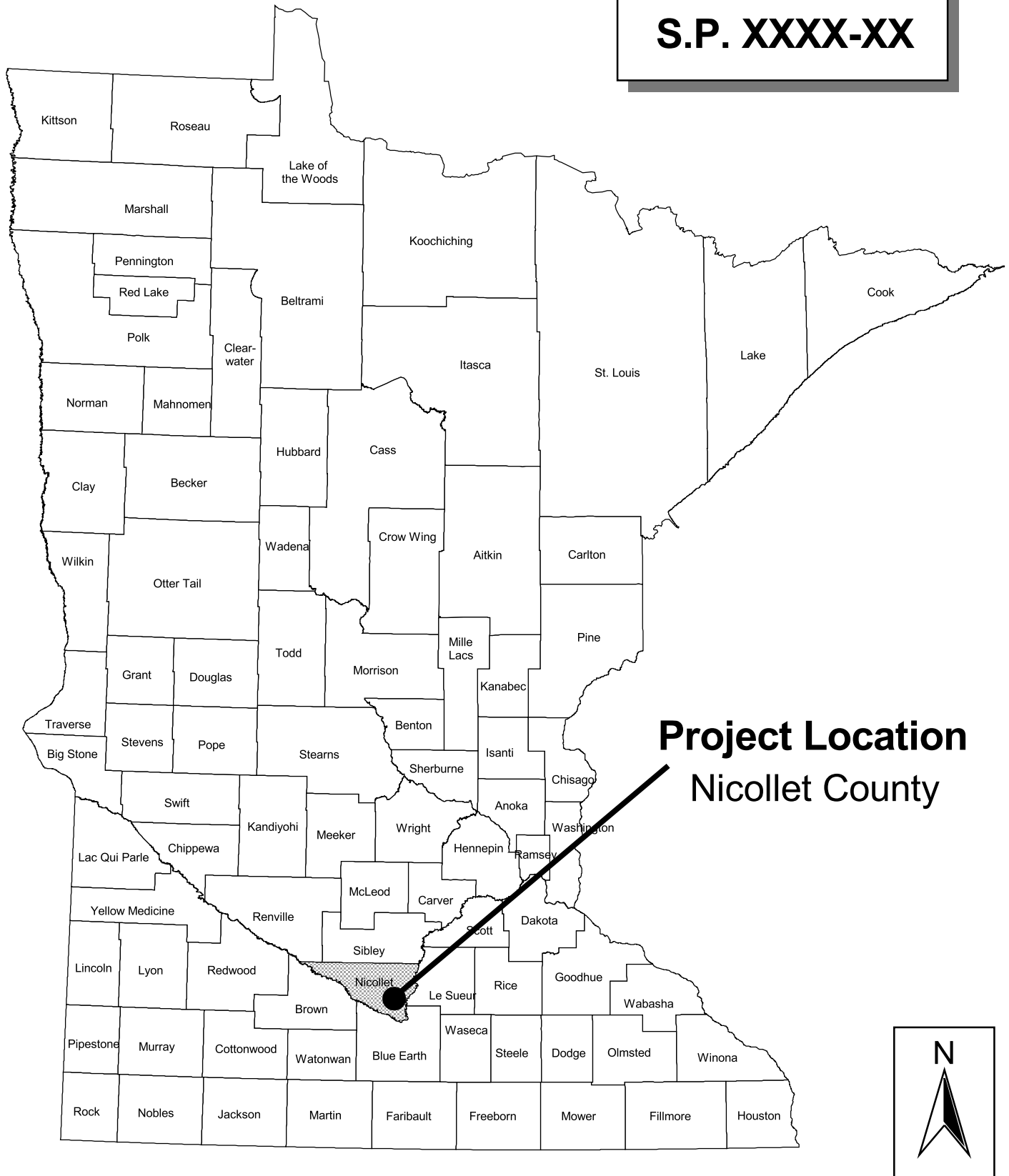
Richard Elasky
Chief Environmental Officer
Program Support Group, Mn/DOT

3/18/03
Date Approved

This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.

The Scoping comment period closes on Friday, May 2, 2003.

S.P. XXXX-XX



**Project Location
Nicollet County**



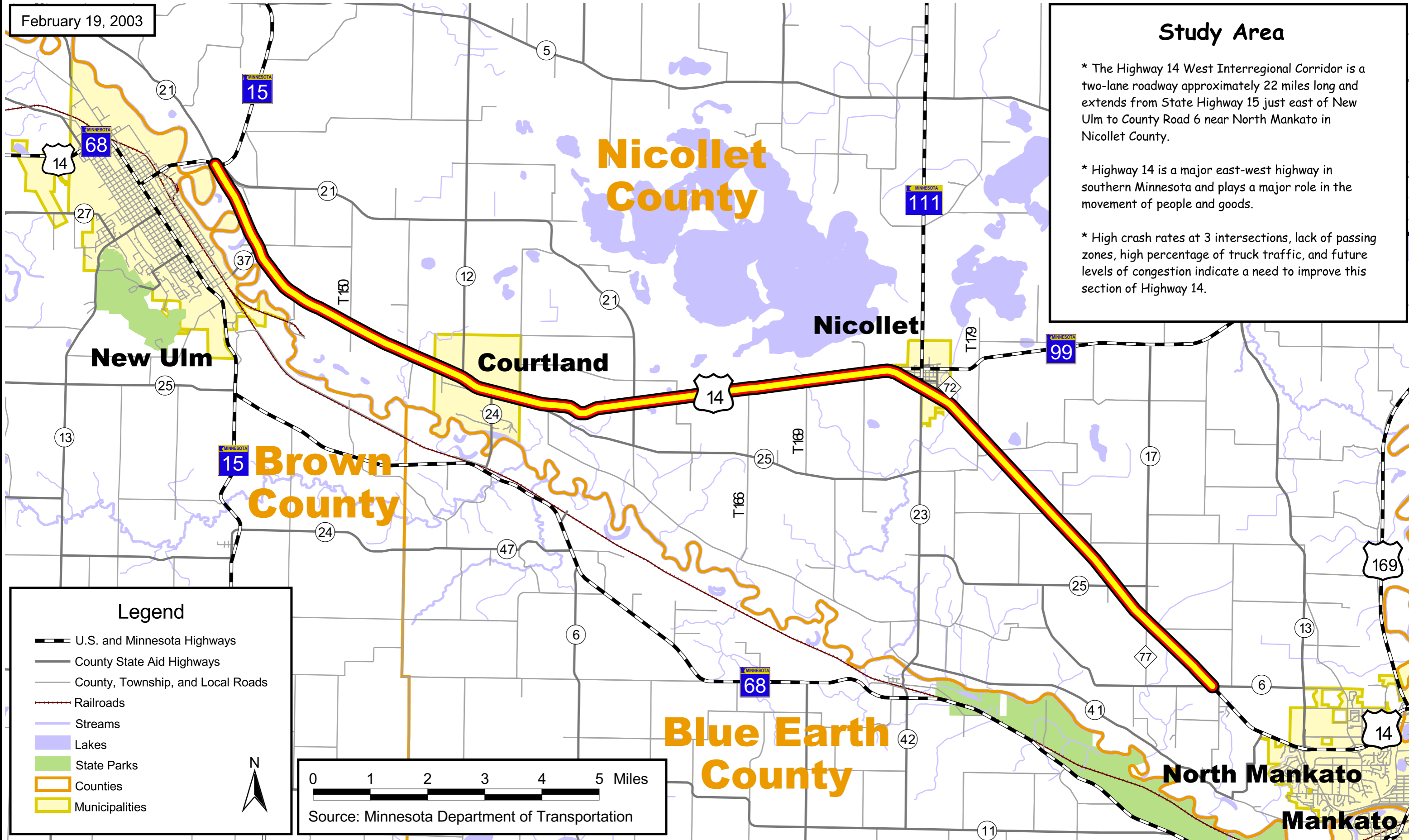
February 19, 2003

Study Area

* The Highway 14 West Interregional Corridor is a two-lane roadway approximately 22 miles long and extends from State Highway 15 just east of New Ulm to County Road 6 near North Mankato in Nicollet County.

* Highway 14 is a major east-west highway in southern Minnesota and plays a major role in the movement of people and goods.

* High crash rates at 3 intersections, lack of passing zones, high percentage of truck traffic, and future levels of congestion indicate a need to improve this section of Highway 14.



Legend

- U.S. and Minnesota Highways
- County State Aid Highways
- County, Township, and Local Roads
- Railroads
- Streams
- Lakes
- State Parks
- Counties
- Municipalities

Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation

SCOPING DOCUMENT

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Appendix A: Detailed Cost Estimate

DRAFT SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT

1.0 REPORT PURPOSE

Designed to help guide the formal “scoping” process and meetings required under state rules, the Scoping Document is required under the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB) rules. Scoping is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, although the scoping documents and formal scoping meetings are requirements of only the state environmental review process.

The Scoping Document outlines the Trunk Highway (TH) 14 West: North Mankato to New Ulm project, its purpose and need, the schedule, and describes the potential alternatives and the key issues to be evaluated in the future environmental document. The Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for this project is the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT).

1.1 SCOPING PROCESS

Purpose of Scoping

The first step in the environmental documentation process is called “Scoping”. Scoping is a major part of the environmental and community impact assessment process. Under Minnesota’s Highway Project Development Process, a Scoping Document is prepared to verify the need for a given project. A reasonable range of alternatives is identified during the scoping process to reduce the scope and bulk of the future environmental document. Scoping is required by law in NEPA so that the public and appropriate governmental agencies are involved early in the decision-making process and can ensure that their concerns are addressed early in project planning. Scoping is instrumental in identifying issues to be considered and/or resolved during the future TH 14 environmental review process.

NEPA requires that social, economic, and environmental considerations are included in the planning of all projects that receive federal funding. The 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 Hearings

This Scoping Document will be circulated to the required federal and state distribution lists and made available to the public for review and comment. A 30-day comment period will begin when the availability notice of this Scoping Document and announcement of the Scoping Meetings are published in the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (*EQB Monitor*), as well as a press release sent to the local newspaper. Two Scoping meetings –one for agencies and one for the general public- will be held in the study area during the comment period to provide an opportunity for involved agencies and the public to comment on the project.

At the Scoping Hearings, the TH 14 West Project Team will explain the environmental review process, describe the alternatives being considered, the benefits and impacts being evaluated during the process, present the public involvement program and schedule, and ask for ideas and comments from the audience. The environmental analysis will be developed to

give an understanding of alternative proposals, cost estimates, benefits gained, and expected impacts. The participants are encouraged to address any aspect of the proposed project, including the alternatives to be studied.

The two Scoping Hearings are scheduled for:

Wednesday, April 23, 2003
Courtland Community Center
300 Railroad Street

Interagency Hearing 2:00 to 3:30 PM

Public Hearing 4:30 to 7:00 PM

Comments

All written and verbal comments will be included in the public record. Verbal comments can be made at the Scoping Hearings and will be recorded by a Court Reporter. Written comments can be submitted at the Scoping Hearings or sent to Mn/DOT District 7 by mail, fax, or e-mail, as follows:

Mark Scheidel, Project Manager
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501 South Victory Drive
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Mankato, MN 56002-4039
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Fax: (507) 389-6281
E-mail: mark.scheidel@dot.state.mn.us

Comments are due by Friday, May 2, 2003.

1.2 SCOPING DECISION

At the end of the Scoping process, a Scoping Decision Document will be prepared by Mn/DOT, the RGU, documenting the process by which the alternatives were refined and selected for evaluation in the future environmental document. The social, economic, and environmental impacts that will need in-depth study will be identified as well as the schedule and the permits for which information will be developed concurrently with the environmental document. The document will include comments received and describe the meeting preparations, content of the meetings, attendance, the decisions of Mn/DOT and the refined scope of the project that will be included in the future environmental document.