



MnDOT selects Highway 14 alternative

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— Staying on the existing alignment, except for the expected north bypass of Courtland and a close south bypass of Nicollet, is the preferred alignment for expanding Highway 14 to four lanes from New Ulm to North Mankato, the Minnesota Department of Transportation said.

MnDOT will present the preferred alternative (identified as W1 and E1 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement) to the public at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Courtland Community Center, 300 Railroad St.

“Building four lanes on the existing alignment west of Courtland (W1) creates some challenges, but the option of a new roadway on top of the bluff would be very costly to construct, maintain and would cause significant impacts to farmland,” said project manager Peter Harff in a news release.

The north bypass of Courtland is the route the city has proposed for several years.

“The preferred route east of Courtland (E1) will require MnDOT to account for wetlands and coordinate with Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area, but the route dramatically reduces farmland impacts and better serves the city of Nicollet,” Harff said.

MnDOT said the preferred alignment is a consistent design (four lanes with limited access) with Highway 14 east of Mankato; improves travel safety by making the intersection with Highway 15 near New Ulm safer (a full interchange); improves entrances to Courtland and Nicollet; and improves mobility to better serve increased traffic and the high truck count on Highway 14. Staying on the existing alignment minimizes environmental impacts and reduces costs to maintain parallel routes.

MnDOT plans to complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement by December 2010. No part of the project is funded.

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