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Highway 14 improvements to be announced

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By Josh Moniz - Staff Writer , The Journal

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MANKATO - The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will announce plans Tuesday to guarantee the construction of the long-sought, four-lane expansion of Highway 14 between Nicollet and North Mankato, according to a source with direct knowledge on the announcement.

The source, who asked not to be identified, said MnDOT will set the four-lane expansion to be completed in roughly four to six years, depending on funding and the speed of the project. The source of funding for the project will be released at the official announcement.

The source said that MnDOT will also announce safety improvement road work on Highway 14 for the near future. The work will be done prior to the four-lane expansion. It is currently unknown what safety improvements will be done on the highway, but potential projects may include the "Super 2" and "2-plus-1" highway designs that MnDOT previously suggested at the Highway 14 safety audit meeting.

The planned announcement is welcomed by all residents from North Mankato to New Ulm. That segment of two-lane highway has been responsible for 17 fatal crashes since 2000, and it has been accused of strangling growth between North Mankato and New Ulm, particularly because New Ulm has one of the highest concentrations of trucking companies in the state.

MnDOT is expected to hold the official announcement Tuesday morning at the MnDOT District 7 office in Mankato. Gov. Mark Dayton, 1st District U.S. Congressman Tim Walz, state legislators and MnDOT officials will attend the event.

(Josh Moniz can be e-mailed at jmoniz@nujournal.com)

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