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ROCHESTER, Minn. - Congressman Tim Walz met with elected officials and business owners Monday for a last-minute push to make sure the widening of Highway 14 in southern Minnesota remains a priority.

"We are focused on the stretch from New Ulm to Mankato and Owatonna to Dodge Center," said Les Abraham, President of the Highway 14 Partnership. "We're worried this may not get done. We need to fight."

Gov. Mark Dayton and Minnesota Department of Transportation leaders are preparing their 20-year plan of statewide transportation projects, and a recent draft of future projects does not include the widening of the highway.

"This is about safety and economics," said Walz. "It's one of the busiest roadways in the state."

Walz and his constituents have joined together for what they argue is a growing amount of support and hope for the project.

Parts of Highway 14 have already been widened to four lanes, while others remain squeezed.

Leaders in southern Minnesota say the widening of the entire stretch would keep the highway safer and add to an already booming economy.

"It has 17 of our 22 largest employers," said Walz. "It's also the main conduit for moving people into a dynamic city like Rochester."

The governor and MnDOT will release their 20-year plan later this month.