



# 2017~~6~~ Legislative Policy Positions

**MISSION:** The U.S. Highway 14 Partnership supports the completion of a consistent four-lane corridor on U.S. Highway 14 from Rochester to New Ulm.

## STATE POLICY POSITIONS

1. The Partnership opposes any delay or defunding of projects that have been identified for completion:
  - Highway 14 Minnesota River Bridge in New Ulm to be replaced in 2018.
2. The Partnership supports the dedication of the 2017-18 funds previously identified for the North Mankato to Nicollet expansion projects (approximately \$19 million) for use on other Highway 14 improvements now that this project has been accelerated to 2015-16 and will be funded through the Corridors of Commerce program.
3. The Partnership will work to secure state funding for the projects that are currently unplanned and un/underfunded:
  - The remaining phases of the Owatonna to Dodge Center Highway 14 four-lane expansion: 54<sup>th</sup> Ave to County Road 16 (phase 2) and County Road 16 to Highway 56 (phase 3).
    - i. Funding for Phase 2 right-of-way acquisition was provided through the Corridors of Commerce program in 2014.
  - The Highway 14 four-lane expansion from New Ulm to (west) Nicollet.
  - The development of a draft Environmental Impact Statement for the TH14/TH169 interchange.
  - The two-lane upgrade of Highway 14 west of New Ulm. MnDOT should study the expansion of Highway 14 west of New Ulm.
4. Recognizing that Highway 14 projects are strong candidates under program criteria, the Partnership supports the continued and ongoing funding of the Corridors of Commerce program. The goals of this program are to build highway capacity by removing bottlenecks, improve the movement of freight, and remove barriers to commerce. Projects are selected and awarded by MnDOT on a competitive basis. Given the billions of dollars of unmet need for highway expansion projects throughout the state in addition to Highway 14, the Partnership supports at least \$200 million in annual program funding. While the Partnership supports the use of Trunk

Highway bonds, the program should also receive an annual appropriation for non-bondable project needs, such as right-of-way acquisition, environmental work, and design.

5. The Partnership will support measures to generate additional revenue for transportation projects, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Appropriation of trunk highway bonds;
  - b. Gas tax increase, including indexing;
  - c. Increase in Motor Vehicles Sales Tax;
  - d. Increase in motor vehicle registration taxes;
  - e. ~~Statutory dedication of general sales tax to transportation;~~
  - ef. A gross receipts tax on motor fuels;
  - g. ~~Statutory dedication of leased vehicle sales tax to transportation purposes;~~
  - h. ~~Statutory dedication of the vehicle rental tax to transportation purposes.~~
6. The Partnership supports the inclusion of language that specifically directs resources towards Highway 14 in transportation finance legislation.
7. The Partnership supports the statutory allocation of the MVST constitutional amendment, with a 60% dedication to highways, 36% dedication to metro-area transit, and 4% dedication to Greater Minnesota transit. The Partnership opposes any legislative effort to reduce the percentage of funding dedicated to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund.
8. The Partnership supports state research and study of alternative measures to fund transportation projects including value capture fees, tolling, congestion pricing, mileage fees, and weight fees.
9. Public-private partnerships between MnDOT and private interests should not replace or downgrade programmed highway expansion projects or other meritorious highway expansion projects like those on Highway 14.
10. The Partnership encourages Highway 14 corridor legislators to secure positions on the Senate Transportation and Public Safety Budget Division and House Transportation Finance Committee
11. The Partnership requests MnDOT to create a National Highway Freight Network in accordance with the federal FAST Act surface transportation funding program. The Partnership further requests MnDOT to designate U.S. Highway 14 as a critical rural freight corridor and to apply for federal funding to support the expansion of U.S. Highway 14 to four lanes between New Ulm and Rochester.

## **FEDERAL POLICY POSITIONS**

1. Any new federal funds directed to Highway 14 are meant to supplement current funding and do not act as replacement of state funding.

2. The Partnership encourages Congressional members representing the Highway 14 corridor to secure positions on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee or the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

| ~~Adopted at the 2016 Annual Meeting, January 7, 2016~~Proposed for the 2017 Annual Meeting, January 12, 2017