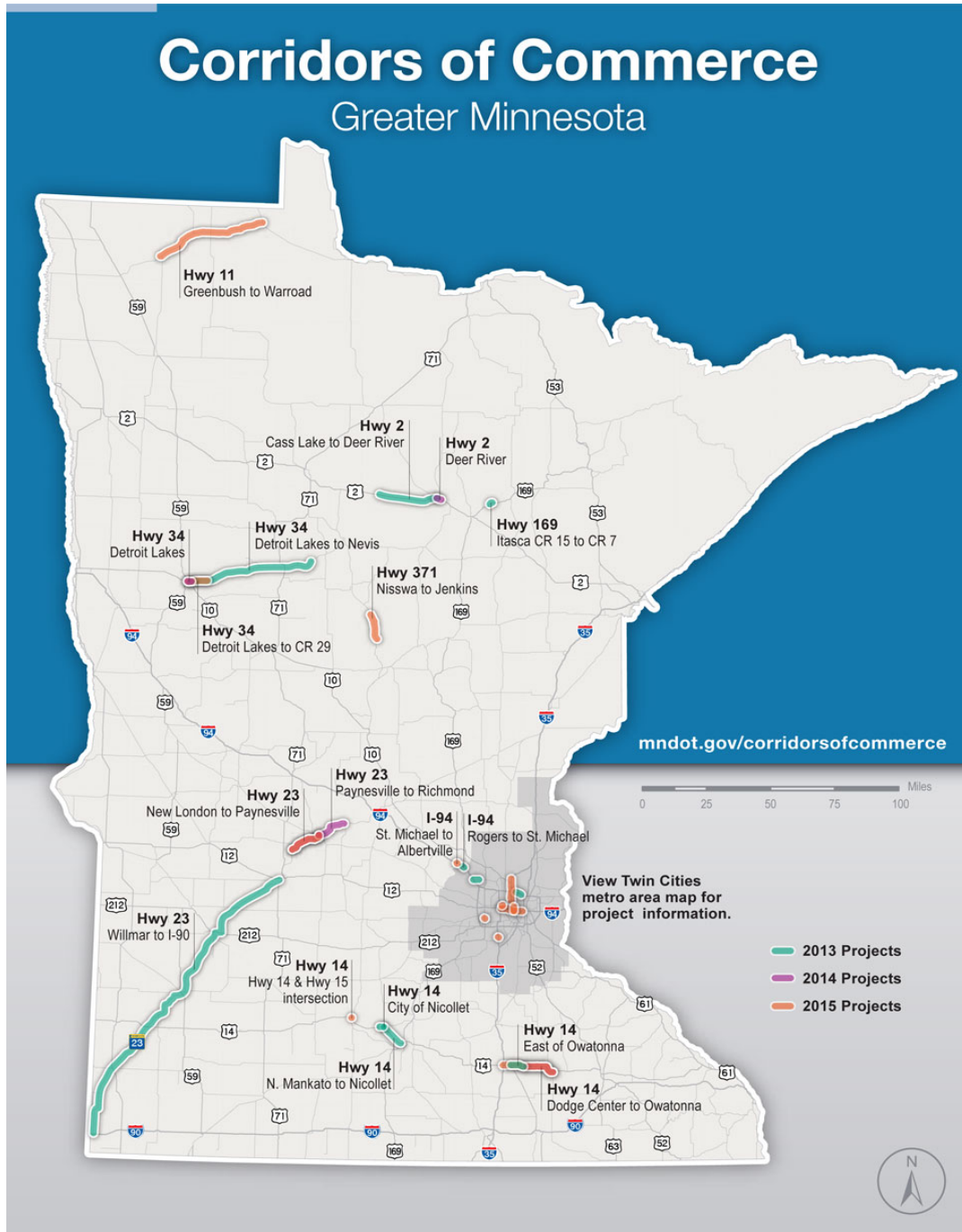




2015 Report on the

Corridors of Commerce Program

November 2015



Prepared by

The Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155-1899

Phone: 651-296-3000

Toll-Free: 1-800-657-3774

TTY, Voice or ASCII: 1-800-627-3529

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Legislative Request

This report is issued to comply with [Minnesota Statutes 161.088, subdivision 7](#).

161.088 Corridors of Commerce Program.

Subd. 7. Legislative report; evaluation. (a) Starting in 2014, annually by November 1, the commissioner shall electronically submit a report on the corridors of commerce program to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and finance. At a minimum, the report must include:

- (1) a summary of the program, including a review of the project selection process, eligibility and criteria, funds expended in the previous selection cycle, and total funds expended since program inception;
- (2) a listing of projects funded under the program in the previous selection cycle, including:
 - (i) project classification;
 - (ii) a breakdown of project costs and funding sources;
 - (iii) any future operating costs assigned under subdivision 6; and
 - (iv) a brief description that is comprehensible to a lay audience;
- (3) a listing of candidate project recommendations required under subdivision 5, paragraph (b), including project classification and disposition in the selection process; and
- (4) any recommendations for changes to statutory requirements of the program.

(b) Starting in 2016, and in every even-numbered year thereafter, the commissioner shall incorporate into the report the results of an independent evaluation of impacts and effectiveness of the program. The evaluation must be performed by agency staff or a consultant. The individual or individuals performing the evaluation must have experience in program evaluation, but must not be regularly involved in the program's implementation.

The cost of preparing this report is under \$5,000.

2013 Corridors of Commerce Program Summary

The 2013 Minnesota Legislature created the Corridors of Commerce program by authorizing the sale of up to \$300 million in new bonds for the construction, reconstruction and improvement of trunk highways. The program received an additional \$11.4 million in federal Trunk Highway 610 High Priority Project funds and State Road Construction Project Delivery funds, making the total available resources \$311.4 million. The law identified two major goals for the program:

- Provide additional highway capacity on segments where bottlenecks occur in the system
- Improve the movement of freight and reduce barriers to commerce

Projects considered for the Corridors of Commerce program in 2013 were classified in one of three eligibility categories:

- **Metro Capacity Improvement:** Projects within MnDOT's Metro District that increase capacity on segments in the Twin Cities area that do not end at other trunk highways or that have fewer lanes than adjacent segments.
- **Interregional Corridor Capacity Improvement:** Projects outside MnDOT's Metro District that increase capacity on segments that do not connect to other trunk highways or that have fewer lanes than adjacent segments.
- **Statewide Freight Bottlenecks:** Projects that remove or reduce barriers to commerce and ease or preserve freight movement.

MnDOT encouraged its district offices, key stakeholders and the public to suggest potential projects for this funding. The funding for Corridors of Commerce in 2013 came in the form of bonds that had a specific end date associated with them and could not be used to buy right of way. Because the legislative intent of the funding was to deliver actual construction projects, MnDOT initially screened all submitted suggestions for delivery time frame and additional funding needs. Projects deemed as viable advanced for further consideration using the following criteria:

- Construction start date
- Relative return on investment
- Travel time improvement
- Local support
- Multimodal connections

In November 2013, MnDOT selected 10 projects to receive the 2013 Corridors of Commerce funds (see Figure 1). At the time of selection, the scope for many of the chosen projects was not fully known or defined and the cost estimates were preliminary. MnDOT conducted a process in January 2014 to better define the project scopes and increase confidence in the cost estimates. This process included the following goals:

- Recommend budgets for each project based on available funds
- Identify project risks and risk management strategies
- Recommend a process for managing program contingency

Even though MnDOT identified \$5.79 million more in program costs than was available in funding, MnDOT’s risk management process concluded there was an 83 percent probability that all projects could be delivered without exceeding the available funds; MnDOT proceeded to program and deliver all of the selected projects.

Figure 1 – Original 2013 Selected Projects and Estimates

District	Route	Construction Start Date	Project Program Category	Project Delivery (Professional / Technical Only)	Construction Estimate (Letting)	Project Budget
D1	Hwy 169	2016	Freight Bottleneck	\$1,930,000	\$8,300,000	\$10,230,000
D2	Hwy 2	2014	Freight Bottleneck	\$120,000	\$10,500,000	\$10,620,000
D3	I-94	2014	IRC Capacity Improvement	\$3,550,000	\$32,400,000	\$35,950,000
D4	Hwy 34	2014	Freight Bottleneck	\$630,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,630,000
Metro	Hwy 610	2014	Metro Capacity Improvement	\$7,870,000	\$100,300,000	\$108,170,000
Metro	I-694	2015	Metro Capacity Improvement	\$270,000	\$42,300,000	\$42,570,000
D6	Hwy 14	2014	IRC Capacity Improvement	\$820,000	\$15,000,000	\$15,820,000
D7	Hwy 14	2015	IRC Capacity Improvement	\$3,950,000	\$38,500,000	\$42,450,000
D8	Hwy 23	2016	Freight Bottleneck	\$900,000	\$10,900,000	\$11,800,000
Total				\$20,040,000	\$268,200,000	\$288,240,000
Management Reserve						\$29,280,000
Total w/o ROW						\$317,520,000

NOTE: Although there is a gap of approximately \$5.79 million between total anticipated costs and total available funds, MnDOT’s risk management process concluded that there is an 83 percent probability that all projects can be delivered without exceeding the available funds. Project management strategies are in place to deliver the projects within budget limits.

Since then, MnDOT has placed a significant effort on managing the scope and cost of the selected projects in order to minimize the risk of exceeding the budget for the program. These efforts have resulted in the projected program coming in substantially below the original program amount.

With these cost savings, MnDOT decided to fund the construction of Highway 371 in District 3. This project fit well with the program, was deliverable within the desired timeframe, and had competed well in the initial project selection process. The Highway 371 project had \$5.8 million already identified in federal funds, so only \$52.2 million of corridors of commerce funding was needed for the project. Figure 2 shows a revised list of the projects and their costs.

Figure 2: Revised 2013 Projects and Costs

District	Route	Construction Start Date	Project Program Category	Project Delivery (Professional / Technical Only)	Construction Estimate (Letting)	Project Budget
D1	Hwy 169	2016	Freight Bottleneck	\$1,930,000	\$8,300,000	\$10,230,000
D2	Hwy 2	2014	Freight Bottleneck	\$120,000	\$13,310,000	\$13,430,000
D3	I-94	2014	IRC Capacity Improvement	\$3,550,000	\$28,330,000	\$31,880,000
D4	Hwy 34	2014	Freight Bottleneck	\$630,000	\$7,920,000	\$8,550,000
M	Hwy 610	2014	Metro Capacity Improvement	\$7,870,000	\$80,730,000	\$88,600,000
M	I-694	2015	Metro Capacity Improvement	\$270,000	\$42,300,000	\$42,570,000
D6	Hwy 14	2014	IRC Capacity Improvement	\$820,000	\$12,010,000	\$12,830,000
D7	Hwy 14	2015	IRC Capacity Improvement	\$3,950,000	\$31,660,000	\$35,610,000
D8	Hwy 23	2016	Freight Bottleneck	\$900,000	\$10,900,000	\$11,800,000
D3	Hwy 371*	2015	IRC Capacity Improvement	N / A	\$58,000,000	\$58,000,000
	Total			\$20,040,000	\$287,660,000	\$313,500,000
	Management Reserve					\$3,700,000
	Total w/o ROW					\$317,200,000

* Added project using cost savings accumulated from other 10 projects

MnDOT received far more project recommendations than it had in available Corridors of Commerce funding. However, MnDOT appreciated the efforts of district staff, stakeholders and the public in identifying those potential projects for the program. A list of all the suggestions received is available on the [Corridors of Commerce webpage](#).

On the following pages are short summaries of each of the 2013 selected projects. Please note that the two Highway 14 projects between Mankato and Nicollet were merged into a single project after the initial selection process.

In addition to the original 10 projects selected for the Corridors of Commerce Program, MnDOT was able to capture approximately \$45 million in project savings and delivery efficiencies from its original estimates. The result was the inclusion of an additional project into the 2013 program that still met the criteria for delivery. The project selected was a four-lane widening project on Highway 371 from Nisswa to Jenkins, which is classified as an IRC Capacity Development Project. More details on this project will be included in future legislative updates.

District 1: Highway 169 – Four-Lane Expansion
from Itasca CR 15 to CR 7

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
3116-142	\$10,196,000	\$493,000	\$1,930,000	\$8,300,000	June 2016	2016-17

Description

This project will widen and reconstruct 1.5 miles of Highway 169. The reconstruction will expand the 1.5 miles of Highway 169 from two lanes to four lanes from the east end of the Bovey Bypass at Itasca CR 15 to approximately 900 feet east of Itasca CR 7.

Funding

- \$10,200,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$624,000 State Highway

Benefits

- Strengthen corridor reliability for freight by eliminating a bottleneck point on this important economic corridor for northeastern Minnesota.
- Provide improved safety and pavement condition on the corridor.

Status as of 10/01/2015

- On schedule for a 6/3/2016 bid letting.
- Construction should start in late summer 2016 and continue through fall 2017.
- Project is currently being designed and is on schedule.

**District 2: Highway 2 – Passing Lanes between
Cass Lake and Deer River**

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
1102-62	\$10,557,000	\$0	\$120,000	\$13,310,000	August 2014	2014-15

Description

This project will construct new passing lanes on three segments of US 2 between Cass Lake and Ball Club (three miles west of Deer River). In addition, three left-turn lanes, nine right-turn lanes and one bypass lane will be constructed at various intersections along the corridor.

Funding

- \$13,430,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$110,000 State Highway

Project Benefits

- Provide three new passing opportunities to reduce potential freight movement delays along the corridor.
- Improve safety and pavement condition along the corridor.
- Serves the Leech Lake tribal nation since the project is within boundaries.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- This project was let on Aug. 22, 2014.
- Gladen Construction was the successful bidder of the project.
- The project is under construction and will be completed in November 2015.

District 3: Interstate 94 – Auxiliary Lanes from Highway 101 to Highway 241

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
2780-66	\$35,906,000	\$0	\$3,550,000	\$28,330,000	May 2014	2014-15

Description

This project will create an eastbound auxiliary lane on I-94 from the Highway 241 entrance ramp to the Highway 101 exit ramp. On the westbound side, there will be a general purpose lane from just east of Highway 101 to the Highway 241 exit ramp. This project also widens the bridges over the Crow River and includes an extension of the current westbound exit ramp to Highway 101 by approximately 3,500 feet.

Funding

- \$31,880,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$653,296 State Highway

Benefits

- Improve mobility and reduce congestion along the most heavily congested interregional corridor roadways in all of Greater Minnesota.
- Improve travel time reliability and safety along this important economic corridor for the state.
- Reduce freight congestion on this National Freight Corridor.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- Project was let on March 5, 2014.
- Hoffman/PCI was the successful bidder of the project.
- The project is under construction and is on-schedule to be completed November 2015.

District 3: Highway 371 Four-Lane Expressway Nisswa to Jenkins

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
1810-92	\$58,000,000	\$4,900,000	\$0 *	\$58,000,000	October 2015	2015-17

** Project delivery costs for this project were covered by MnDOT's regular construction program.*

Description

The project involves expanding an 8.7-mile segment of Highway 371 from a two-lane roadway to a four-lane roadway. The segment runs from Nisswa to Jenkins.

Funding on Project

- \$52,200,000 in Corridors of Commerce
- \$5,800,000 in Federal Funds

Project Benefits

- Improve mobility along this important tourism corridor for the State.
- Improve the safety and general operation of the corridor.
- Improve freight flows through the region by eliminating several miles of congestion.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- The project is scheduled to be let on Oct. 14, 2015.
- Construction should begin in late fall/early winter 2015 and continue through the fall 2017.

**District 4: Highway 34 - Passing Lanes from
Detroit Lakes to Nevis**

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
0303-64	\$10,579,000	\$20,000	\$630,000	\$7,920,000	June 2014	2014-15

Description

This project will make safety improvements at two intersections on Highway 34 between Detroit Lakes and Nevis. In addition, the project will add five eastbound and four westbound passing lane opportunities along the corridor.

Funding

- \$8,550,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$622,327 State Highway

Benefits

- Improve intersection safety at two key intersections along the corridor.
- Reduce pressure for traffic to make high-risk passes when traveling behind slower moving vehicles, such as commercial trucks and recreation traffic.
- Improve overall connectivity in north central Minnesota.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- Project was let on June 27, 2014.
- Anderson Brothers was the successful bidder for the project.
- The project is under construction and on schedule to be completed.

Metro District: Highway 610 - Complete Freeway from Interstate 94 to CR 81

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
2771-37	\$108,180,000	\$45,000,000	\$7,870,000	\$80,730,000	August 2014	2015-16

Description

This project will connect the existing Highway 610 freeway, which stops at Elm Creek Boulevard, with an interchange to I-94 near the 101st Ave. N. overpass of I-94.

Funding

- \$74,930,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$44,000,000 State Highway
- \$8,000,000 Federal High Priority Project
- \$1,500,000 Local Funding

Benefits

- Provide travel options for commuters and freight transportation in the northern Twin Cities.
- Provide relief to one of the more heavily congested corridors in the state.
- Improve safety and overall operations of the Twin Cities freeway network.
- Assist with improving and maintaining the I-94 as a National Freight Corridor.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- The project was let on Aug. 8, 2014.
- Lunda was the successful bidder.
- Ground-breaking for the project occurred in October 2014.
- Major construction will begin in spring 2015 and continue through fall 2016.

**Metro District: Interstate 694 Shoulder Lane from
Rice Avenue to Lexington Avenue**

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
6285-143	\$41,387,000	\$2,500,000	\$270,000	\$42,300,000	November2015	2016-17

Description

This project constructs an additional lane on both the eastbound and westbound sides of I-694 between US10/Hwy 51 and Rice Street.

Funding

- \$41,387,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$250,000 State Highway

Benefits

- Provide congestion relief via an additional travel lane in both directions along a critical corridor in the Twin Cities.
- Reduce a significant freight bottleneck which affects both the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota freight delivery system.
- Improve safety and pavement condition along this critical corridor.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- The project is scheduled to be let on Nov. 20, 2015.
- Construction should begin in spring 2016 and continue through fall 2017.
- The project is currently being designed and is on schedule.

**District 6: Highway 14 – Four-Lane Expansion
from Highway 218 to CR 80/DM&E Railroad**

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
7402-30	\$15,819,000	\$0	\$820,000	\$12,010,000	April 2014	2014-15

Description

This project will expand a 2.4-mile segment of Highway 14 from two lanes to four lanes from Highway 218 to CR 80. This project represents “Segment 1” of the 16-mile, two-lane segment of Highway 14 between Owatonna and Dodge Center, which will be expanded to four lanes.

Funding

- \$12,830,00 Corridors of Commerce
- \$819,977 State Highway

Benefits

- Improve travel time reliability, reduce congestion and address future safety concerns on a corridor that currently has 18,000 daily commuters.
- Help close part of the two-lane gap on this important economic corridor for southeastern Minnesota.
- Supports other planned investment in the region designed to make the Destination Medical Center a reality.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- The project was let on April 25, 2014.
- Mathiowetz was the successful bidder.
- The project is under construction and on-schedule to be completed.

District 7: Highway 14 – Four-Lane Expressway to North Mankato & the Nicollet Bypass

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
5203-104	\$42,410,000	\$3,366,000	\$3,950,000	\$31,660,000	May 2015	2015-16

Description

This project combines two separate corridor improvements: a widening of a 6.5-mile segment of US Highway 14 from city of Nicollet to North Mankato; and the construction of a 2.5-mile four-lane bypass of the city of Nicollet.

Funding

- \$42,410,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$4,406,500 State Highway

Benefits

- Improve mobility along an important economic corridor for southern Minnesota.
- Support pedestrian safety by moving through traffic out of the city of Nicollet.
- Improve freight flows through the region by eliminating several miles of a congestion bottleneck and provide a bypass.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- Project was let on May 22, 2015.
- Construction began in summer 2015 and should be completed by fall 2016.

District 8: Highway 23 – Passing Lanes between Willmar and Interstate 90

State Project #	Original Budget without ROW	ROW Estimate	Project Delivery Costs	Estimated Construction Letting Cost	Letting Date	Construction Years
4206-22	\$11,223,000	\$0	\$884,000	\$10,900,000	January 2016	2016

Description

This project constructs both eastbound and westbound passing lanes on three segments of Hwy 23 between I-90 and Willmar.

Funding

- \$11,800,000 Corridors of Commerce
- \$334,000 State Highway

Benefits

- Reduce pressure for traffic to make high-risk passes when traveling behind slower moving vehicles, such as commercial trucks and recreation traffic.
- Improve overall connectivity of southwestern Minnesota to the rest of the state.

Status as of 10/1/2015

- This project has been divided into two smaller projects.
- Southern Project, which covers from Marshall to Pipestone, is scheduled for an Oct. 23, 2015 letting.
- Northern Project, which covers from Marshall to Willmar, is scheduled for a May 26, 2016 letting.
- Construction for both projects should begin in late spring 2016 and be completed by fall 2016.
- Both projects are on schedule.

2014 Corridors of Commerce Program Summary

The Minnesota Legislature provided an additional \$31.5 million in trunk highway funding for Corridors of Commerce during the 2014 legislative session. Of that amount, \$6.5 million was available in FY 2014 for projects in Greater Minnesota, and \$25 million was available in FY 2015 for projects statewide. One of the primary intents of the legislation was to use the funding to prepare potential projects for future construction. Preparations could include right of way purchases (in contrast to the 2013 funding), environmental work and design engineering.

Because of the need to identify FY 2014 projects as soon as possible, MnDOT opted to use the projects previously suggested by the districts, stakeholders and the public. Since the focus of the 2014 program was to prepare projects for future construction, MnDOT adjusted its project consideration criteria to include following:

- Advances the readiness of a future project
- Preservation of efficient freight movement
- Return on investment
- Local support

A total of four projects were selected (See Figure 3). Two of the projects, Highway 14 and Highway 23, involve preparing these two major corridors for future expansion, should additional funding become available. The Highway 34 project is for construction to complete a gap on that corridor which was not covered with the 2013 Corridors of Commerce project. When finished, the combined projects will greatly improve the corridor. The final project selected, Highway 2 in Deer River, is a reconstruction along the main corridor through town. This “Main Street” rebuilding project is an example of how the Corridors of Commerce program is able to provide both statewide transportation benefits (through the improved condition and operation of Highway 2) and local economic benefits. In this instance, the community was able to access and improve their underground utilities.

Figure 3: Projects selected for FY 2014 funding

District	Route	Project	Cost Estimate	Project Category	Current Status
D6	Hwy 14	Purchase right of way for expansion between Dodge Center and Owatonna	\$1.5 million	IRC Capacity Development	Purchases are ongoing
D8, D3	Hwy 23	Environmental work to prepare Highway 23 for future expansion from New London to Paynesville and Paynesville to Richmond	\$1.5 million	IRC Capacity Development	Consultant on-board
D4	Hwy 34	Center left turn lane in Detroit Lakes from Highway 59 to County Road 141	\$1.9 million	Freight Improvement	Scheduled for Summer 2016 construction
D1	Hwy 2	Reconstruct segment of roadway in Deer River	\$1.6 million	Freight Improvement	Project scheduled for summer 2017 construction

2015 Corridors of Commerce Program Summary

For the \$25 million allotted in FY 2015, MnDOT used essentially the same consideration criteria as it used on the FY 2014 projects, with the addition of the following criteria:

- Approximately 50 percent of the funding would go to the Twin Cities Metro area and 50 percent of the funding would go to Greater Minnesota.

Unlike the FY 2014 funding, there was sufficient time to go through the same type of project suggestion process as was done in FY 2013. MnDOT again activated the Corridors of Commerce website to allow stakeholders, businesses and the public to submit potential projects for consideration. MnDOT used the projects submitted during the FY 2013 project identification process as a starting point for the FY 2015 list. This meant that all the suggested projects from the 2013 process were automatically on the 2015 list, unless the project was constructed. Only new suggestions were added.

With the focus of the 2014 legislation on getting projects ready for construction if new funding would become available, MnDOT's district offices and central office worked together to identify/select projects for the funding that:

- Met the goal and eligibility of the program
- Were a high priority from the district perspective
- Would substantially accelerate the project's readiness
- Had local support

A total of 12 projects were selected for funding, six in Greater Minnesota and six from the Twin Cities metro area.

In Greater Minnesota, five of the projects specifically accelerate major improvements along several key corridors. From preliminary design all the way to right of way acquisition, these five projects will greatly enhance MnDOT's ability to deliver major corridor investments, should funding become available. The other Greater Minnesota project involves performing some badly needed resurfacing work on Highway 34 to help maintain reliable east-west freight movements in northern Minnesota.

In the Twin Cities metro area, three of the six projects selected involve developing the designs for major bridge and roadway replacements to improve freight movements. Two other projects involve preparing design work for major capacity improvements on I-35W and I-94. One of the projects involved actual construction work along Snelling Avenue in St. Paul to help with some freight improvements, as a part of a larger project on Snelling.

Figure 4: Projects selected for FY 2015 funding

Route	Location	Project	Cost Estimate	Project Category	Current Status
Hwy 14 and Hwy 15 intersection	New Ulm	Preliminary design work	\$700,000	Freight Improvement	Consultant on-board
I-94	St. Michael to Albertville	Design options for lane addition	\$1.4 million	IRC Capacity Development	Consultant on-board
Hwy 11	Greenbush to Warroad	Design passing lanes	\$500,000	Freight Improvement	Consultant on-board
Hwy 14	Owatonna to Dodge Center	Purchase right of way for expansion	\$7.3 million	IRC Capacity Development	On-going
Hwy 23	New London to Paynesville	Purchase right of way for expansion	\$800,000	IRC Capacity Development	Pending environmental work completion
Hwy 34 – CR 29	Detroit Lakes to Becker	Mill and overlay	\$1.8 million	Freight Movement Preservation	Scheduled for summer 2016

Figure 4: Projects selected for FY 2015 funding (continued)

Route	Location	Project	Cost Estimate	Project Category	Current Status
Hwy 169	Nine Mile Creek	Design work for bridge replacement	\$1.5 million	Freight Movement Preservation	On-going
I-35W	Minnesota River crossing	Design work	\$5.5 million	Freight Movement Preservation	Consultant on-board
I-35W	Northern suburbs	Design work for MnPASS system	\$1.1 million	Metro Capacity Development	Consultant on-board
Hwy 65	Central Avenue	Design work for bridge deck replacement	\$1 million	Freight Movement Preservation	Working on scope of work for consultant
I-94	Between Minneapolis and St. Paul	Design work for new pavement, bridges and managed lanes	\$2 million	Metro Capacity Development	Consultant on-board
MN 51 Snelling Avenue	St. Paul	Provide added funding for reconstruction project	\$1.4 million	Freight Improvement	Project under construction