



U.S. Highway 169 Corridor Coalition

Working together to enhance safety, reduce congestion and maximize economic development along the US Highway 169 inter-regional corridor.

www.us169corridorcoalition.com

Members: October 16, 2013

Cities: Matt Shands
Belle Plaine Minnesota Department of Transportation
Bloomington 395 John Ireland Blvd, 215
Edina St. Paul, MN 55155
Jordan
Le Sueur
Mankato
North Mankato
Prior Lake
Savage
Shakopee
St. Peter

Counties:
Blue Earth
Hennepin
Le Sueur
Nicollet
Scott

**Region 9
Development
Commission**

Townships
Louisville
Spring Lake
Sand Creek

**Affiliate
Members:**

Gold Level
Bolton & Menk,
Inc.

Shakopee
Mdewakanton
Sioux Community

WSB &
Associates, Inc.

Silver Level
Canterbury Park

HDR
Engineering, Inc.

Greater Mankato
Growth, Inc.

Land to Air
Express

Bronze Level
McDonalds
(Jordan)

Happy Chef
Systems, Inc.

Re: Corridors of Commerce Project Recommendations

Dear Mr. Shands,

The U.S. Highway 169 Corridor Coalition appreciates the opportunity to recommend projects for the Corridors of Commerce program. The Coalition was established in 2009 and is a nonpartisan, public/private joint powers organization made up of county, city, township, non-profit, and business leaders in a five-county area from Minneapolis to Mankato. The Coalition's focus is the U.S. Highway 169 inter-regional corridor and its importance for connecting rural southern Minnesota to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Significant Corridor for Commuter Traffic and Freight Movement

Current and future population expansion in the southwest metro has increased the importance to ensure U.S. Highway 169 is a safe and valuable corridor for commuter traffic and freight movement. U.S. Highway 169 corridor from Mankato to Interstate 694 plays a key role in moving goods produced in south-central and southwestern Minnesota to regional and international markets. The southwest Minnesota freight traffic has the potential to grow 200 percent by 2030 if the current agricultural trends continue. U.S. Highway 169 provides access to principal highways, rail lines, and the largest intermodal inland waterway grain facility in the upper Midwest (the Ports of Savage).

Project Recommendations

The Coalition identified the following four projects that will provide additional highway capacity on segments where there are currently bottlenecks in the system and improve the movement of freight and reduce barriers to commerce. The four projects include:

- 1) US 169 and MN TH 41/CSAH 78**
- 2) Intersection at US 169 and TH 282/CSAH 9**
- 3) Intersection at US TH 169 and TH 14**
- 4) Congestion Mitigation Project - 169 MnPASS from Marschall Road (CSAH 17) to I-494**

Detailed project information can be found in attachment to this letter. All of the projects recommended by the Coalition support the Corridor of Commerce goal to improve the movement of freight and reduce barriers to commerce. We are committed to continue to invest time and political capital in the U.S. Highway 169 corridor system in partnership with your agency. We encourage you to collaboratively work with your local partners to prioritize the needs on these corridors.

Sincerely,

Jon Ulrich, Chair
U.S. Highway 169 Corridor Coalition

Enclosures: Detailed Project Information



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Corridors of Commerce Project Recommendations Project Descriptions and Community Benefits

1. US 169 and MN TH 41/CSAH 78

Interchange at the intersection of US 169 and MN TH 41/CSAH 78 under the State Freight Bottleneck and Metro Capacity categories. This US 169 intersection currently provides critical access to the existing TH 41, the principal arterial river crossing into northern Carver County. An interchange will provide an important east-west connection to US 169 for the CSAH 42 corridor via CSAH 78.

US 169 is an interregional corridor that serves a key freight connection between Southern Minnesota including Mankato to the Twin Cities, including the Ports of Savage. Freight traffic on US 169 and TH 41 approaches 3,050 and 1,500 trucks per day, respectively. Currently, 32,000 vehicles pass through this intersection on TH 169 daily. TH 41 experiences 17,000 vehicles per day. Traffic is projected to approach 50,000 vehicles per day on US 169 and 25,000 vehicles per day on TH 41 by 2030.

Although a new TH 41 river crossing has been evaluated, it is unlikely to be funded within the next twenty years. It is critical that the existing TH 41/CSAH 78 and US 169 intersection be reconstructed as an interchange to remove the existing traffic signal to correct safety and congestion issues, eliminate the freight bottleneck and support economic growth along the US 169 corridor during the next two decades. Preliminary interchange concepts have been developed by MnDOT at the current intersection location focused on serving the existing development patterns in the short term prior to the construction of the new regional river crossing. At the time of the new river crossing construction, projected volumes will still warrant a four-lane river crossing for local access needs.

Community Benefits:

- Construction of an interchange would improve safety on the corridor by removing the at-grade signalized intersection that becomes congested during peak hours. The intersection crash and severity rates are well above the expected crash rates for similar intersections. The intersection consistently ranks among the top 200 statewide in a number of crash statistics.
- An interchange will improve the mobility of the US 169 Corridor for freight and non-freight traffic.
- This interchange will provide an important connection to US 169 for the CSAH 42 corridor via CSAH 78. CSAH 42 is a major arterial serving the east/west mobility needs of the south Metro area connecting I-35W, TH 77, TH 52 and TH 61.
- The interchange will continue to support economic growth along the US 169 Corridor in the Shakopee area. Recently announced business expansions and additions will bring approximately 5,000 new jobs to the Corridor. Recent SCALE economic development studies suggest this area is the next logical location for industrial development.
- The interchange will continue MnDOT's efforts to remove signalized intersections from the TH 169 Corridor to improve safety and mobility. With the CH 69/US 169 interchange project expected to be completed in 2014, the US 169/TH 41 is the next signalized intersection.



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- The interchange will support efforts by the County, City of Shakopee, and Louisville Township to establish a supporting roadway network along both sides of US 169.

The US Highway 169 Corridor Coalition identified the US 169/TH 41 interchange as the number one priority project under the Corridors of Commerce program. Planning level estimates provided by MnDOT suggest the project would cost at least \$15 million for construction plus right of way costs. This project could be delivered by the end of 2016.

2. Intersection at US 169 and TH 282/CSAH 9

Interchange at the intersection of US 169 and MN TH 282/CSAH 9 under the State Freight Bottleneck and Metro Capacity categories. This US 169 intersection currently provides access to the existing TH 282 and river crossing into Carver County providing a connection to US 212.

This intersection has a long history of severe crashes and is considered one of the 200 most dangerous intersections in Minnesota. Safety concerns, in addition to higher traffic volume, county growth and development pressure, make a grade-separated interchange at US 169/TH 282/CSAH 9 a key priority. Discussions concerning this interchange have been ongoing since the late 1990s.

TH 169 is an interregional corridor that serves a key freight connection between Southern Minnesota including Mankato to the Twin Cities, including the Ports of Savage. Freight traffic on TH 169 in this area approaches 1,800 trucks per day. Currently, 22,700 vehicles pass through this intersection on US 169 daily. TH 282 experiences 8,600 vehicles per day. CSAH 9 experiences 6,600 vehicles per day. Traffic is projected to approach 48,000 (NE leg of US 169) and 37,000 (SW leg of TH 169) vehicles per day on US 169, 15,500 vehicles per day on TH 282, and 19,100 vehicles per day on CSAH 9 by 2030.

Community Benefits:

- Create a safer environment for motorist and pedestrians.
- Preserve and enhance the Jordan business section and increase opportunities for businesses.
- Protect the right-of-way and the environment.
- Enhance one of the few Minnesota River crossings between Scott and Carver Counties.

3. Intersection at US 169 and TH 14

The 2003 US 169/TH 14 Management Plan recommended transitioning US 169 to a freeway as a high safety priority for the regional corridor. Traffic signals at Lind Street and Webster Avenue will be replaced with interchanges. The likely location for a grade separation are just north of Webster Avenue to north of TH 14. Frontage roads will connect from parallel routes in North Mankato into Mankato to service the Lind St. commercial area. Studies determined that 70 percent of the traffic serviced by the local changes when compared to the current access system was significantly improved by this concept. Access provided by grade separation enhanced commercial activities adjoining the highway.



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Community Benefits:

- Two signal systems that are prone to accidents from slow-moving traffic conflicting with high-speed US 169 corridor vehicles will be removed.
- The changes will separate local commercial activities, while providing access to US 169/TH 14 through a ramp design rather than right-angle signal design.

4. Congestion Mitigation Project:

169 MnPASS from Marshall Road (CSAH 17) to I-494

The Met Council forecasts an additional 800,000 people in the region by 2030. Of that amount, 100,000 are expected to reside in Scott County. New transit opportunities will be needed to serve this growing population. The existing transit service barely meets current demand. The Bloomington Ferry Bridge is one of the key river crossings in the region. An option to reduce congestion is to add a MnPASS Express Lanes to US 169 over the Bloomington Ferry Bridge (from CSAH 17 to I-494). MnPASS Express Lanes are a cost-effective strategy for managing congestion, using existing road capacity to reduce travel times. Express Lanes are free for buses, carpools and motorcycles; people who drive alone can use the lanes by paying an electronic fee. When traffic slows to 50 mph, the fee to enter the MnPASS lanes increases. MnPASS Express Lanes demonstrate how congestion is reduced in high-demand urban corridors without expanding the highway footprint.

Freight traffic on US 169 in this area ranges from 6,400 to 3,200 trucks per day. Currently, between 80,000 to 36,000 vehicles pass through this area on US 169 daily. Traffic is projected to approach 120,000 to 49,000 vehicles per day by 2030.

Community Benefits:

- Priced/managed lanes are proving to be an effective way to manage congestion and improve throughput on the highway system as demonstrated by I-394 and I-35W.
- Most of the Major River crossings in the south metro are at capacity and MnPASS dynamic pricing can help to maximum the capacity on this river bridge.
- The MnPASS infrastructure can serve a dual purpose by also providing transit a running way for safer and more efficient transit operations.
- Provide commuters more predictable travel times.
- Transit riders are guaranteed faster, congestion-free service because buses can always use the lane.