

Highway 14 Eagle Lake Corridor Study

Executive Summary

I. Purpose and Scope

The Highway 14 Eagle Lake Corridor Study, led by the Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and local communities, aimed to define a long-term transportation vision for the Highway 14 corridor between CSAH 12 and Highway 60 as shown in **Figure 1**. The study addresses safety, mobility, economic vitality, resiliency, and multimodal access, incorporating extensive technical analysis and community engagement.

Figure 1. Study Area



II. Key Issues and Needs

- Safety - The corridor has a significantly higher crash rate than similar highways, with several intersections (CSAH 56, CSAH 17/27, Hwy 60) exceeding critical crash rates.
- Mobility - While most intersections currently operate acceptably, some movements experience high delays. Projected traffic growth will worsen delays by 2045 without improvements.
- Speed Management - 85th percentile speeds exceed the posted 65 mph limit.
- Local Connectivity - Desire for safe and efficient access to Eagle Lake, Mankato, freight/industrial areas, and agricultural zones.
- Environmental Considerations - Includes wetlands, water resources, floodplains, endangered species habitats, and prime farmland.
- Freight and Commercial Traffic - Heavy commercial vehicles represent 10–15% of overall traffic.
- Bike/Pedestrian Infrastructure - Unsafe for non-motorized users; improved connections across Hwy 14 desired.
- Future Development - Growth in and around Eagle Lake will increase transportation demands.

III. Public Engagement

Three phases of engagement included surveys, public meetings, pop-up events, and online feedback. Key community priorities were:

- Improving safety (especially at J-turns and high-speed intersections)
- Managing traffic flow and speed
- Enhancing business and neighborhood access
- Supporting intersection changes and multimodal connectivity

Residents expressed concerns about the difficulty and danger of crossing or entering Highway 14, especially at J-turns and during peak hours. There was strong support for grade-separated interchanges, space for safe acceleration and deceleration, full access to Eagle Lake at CSAH 56 and at CSAH 17/27, and consideration of emergency access and township access/agricultural movements.

IV. Concept Development and Evaluation

Figure 2 shows the multiple corridor concepts considered in the study. Concepts included combinations of interchanges, High T intersections, right-in/right-out designs, and overpasses.

Figure 2. Summary of all Concepts Considered

| | CSAH 56 | CSAH 55 | CSAH 17/27 | Recommendation | Reason |
|---|--------------|----------------|--------------|--|---|
| 1 | High T | Full Closure | Interchange | Initially Dismissed Reconsidered as Concept D2 | Dismissed in early screening as other concepts provide adequate access at less cost. Reconsidered based on public input following the March/April public engagement events. |
| 2 | High T | Full Closure | Overpass | Carry Forward as Concept A | Concept considered in detailed evaluation and shared at March/April public engagement events. |
| 3 | High T | Full Closure | RIRO | Carry Forward as Concept B | Concept considered in detailed evaluation and shared at March/April public engagement events. |
| 4 | Full Closure | Full Closure | Interchange | Dismiss | No access at CSAH 56 not acceptable for Eagle Lake. |
| 5 | High T | Full Closure | High T | Carry Forward as Concept C | Concept considered in detailed evaluation and shared at March/April public engagement events. |
| 6 | High T | High T (North) | RIRO (South) | Dismiss | Requires substantial realignment; High Cost; Limited county road network continuity |
| 7 | RIRO | Full Closure | Interchange | Carry Forward as Concept D | Concept considered in detailed evaluation and shared at March/April public engagement events. |
| 8 | High T | Full Closure | Full Closure | Dismiss | Only one access point to Eagle Lake; No county road network continuity |
| 9 | Full Closure | Full Closure | Overpass | Dismiss | No access to Eagle Lake; Limited county road network continuity |

RIRO = Right-in/Right-out

Concepts were evaluated using criteria for safety, mobility, social/economic/environmental impacts, and cost.

- Safety: All concepts would reduce vehicle conflict points and are expected to lower crash frequency by 24–40% and crash severity by 53–68%.
- Mobility: Most concepts maintain acceptable intersection operations, but some would require rerouting traffic and could impact accessibility Eagle Lake.
- Cost: Preliminary estimates ranged from \$36M to \$75M, with interchange options being the most expensive.
- Benefit-Cost Analysis: All recommended concepts have positive BCA ratios (≥ 3.0), indicating benefits outweigh costs.

V. Recommendations and Study Outcomes

The Project Management Team (PMT) recommended an Interchange at the Hwy 60/Hwy 14 intersection as shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3. Hwy 60 Recommendation



The PMT, except for the City of Eagle Lake, recommended Concept D, which included a right-in, right-out at CSAH 56, an interchange at CSAH 17/27 and an interchange Hwy 60. This preliminary recommendation was also presented and discussed at Eagle Lake City Council Meetings and an Agency Meeting as summarized below. Based on feedback from these meetings, a phased approach to implementation was included with the Concept D recommendation as shown in **Figure 4 and 5** and described below:

- **Initial Build Out Phase** – Concept D with a right-in, right-out at CSAH 56 and an interchange at CSAH 17/27 to be developed concurrently. The Hwy 60 interchange would be an independent project with timing to be determined based on need.
- **Long-Range Vision** – High T at CSAH 56. The City of Eagle Lake may pursue funding for design and construction of a High T at CSAH 56 after the initial build out of Concept D is complete.

Figure 4. Eagle Lake Area Recommendation – Initial Build Out (Concept D)



Figure 5. Eagle Lake Area Long Range Vision – High T



VI. Study Outcome

The Highway 14 Eagle Lake Corridor Study did not conclude with full consensus by all partners on a corridor vision. The following summarizes where agencies did agree and where disagreement remained.

- **Agencies agreed on:**
 - Recommendation for an interchange at the Highway 14/Highway 60 intersection. This recommendation was supported by the PMT and PTAC.
 - Full access at CSAH 17/27. As noted below in the section below, the design of the full access was not agreed upon. Blue Earth County and MnDOT supported an interchange design (Concept D). The City of Eagle Lake supported an overpass with right-in/right-out design (Concept A).
- **Agencies did not agree on:**
 - The design of full access at CSAH 17/27
 - The Eagle Lake City Council passed a motion by a 3-2 vote on August 12, 2025, in support of Concept A. This concept includes an overpass with right-in/right-out design at CSAH 17/27. The council stated this design was best for the City of Eagle Lake. No further details were shared.
 - The PMT (except the City of Eagle Lake), Blue Earth County, and MnDOT recommended Concept D with a traditional interchange design at CSAH 17/27. This design did not require construction of new roadway and provided full access at the existing county road intersection with Hwy 14, providing continuity of the county network north and south of Highway 14.
 - Access at CSAH 56
 - The Eagle Lake City Council passed a motion by a 3-2 vote on August 12, 2025, in support of Concept A. This concept includes full access with a High T design at CSAH 56 with the initial build out phase.
 - The PMT (except the City of Eagle Lake), Blue Earth County, and MnDOT recommended Concept D with a right-in/right-out at CSAH 56 in the Initial Build Out phase and a High T at CSAH 56 in the Long-Range Vision if Eagle Lake pursued and secured design and construction funding for the improvement.

VII. Next Steps

The PMT met for a final time on August 28, 2025, to agree on the following documentation of next steps:

- Eagle Lake Area (CSAH 12 to CSAH 17/27)
 - There is no funding for improvements beyond pavement project in MnDOT's current 10-year plan.

- There are no current plans to seek state or federal funding for Hwy 14 improvements in the Eagle Lake Area due to lack of consensus by project partners.
 - If the City of Eagle Lake can secure complete external funding for both projects, project partners are willing to revisit project support and next steps.
 - MnDOT will continue to monitor access to Hwy 14 and address safety and operational issues as needs dictate. It is anticipated that individual movements and/or access points will be modified or closed as needs dictate.
- Hwy 60 Area (CSAH 17/27 to Hwy 60)
 - MnDOT will continue to monitor township access to Hwy 14 and address safety issues as needs dictate. Access is not anticipated to be modified unless needed prior to interchange construction.
 - The Hwy 60 interchange timing will be driven by future traffic volumes, safety issues, and local road connections.