



Policy Advisory Committee Meeting

Agenda

Thursday April 14, 2016

1:30 – 3:15 pm

Woodbury City Hall

Note: The Gateway Corridor Commission meeting will begin at 3:30 pm.

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Policy Advisory Committee – Vice Chair Nominations and Election**
- 3. Overview of Gateway Corridor Process**
 - a. Draft EIS Project Activities Over Past Three Months
 - b. Outreach Activities
 - i. January – April 2016
 1. Oakdale Neighborhood Meetings
 2. Topic Presentations/Discussion (*Environmental Issues/Process and Ridership*)
 - c. Agency Coordination
 - 4. Public Comments**
 - 5. Managed Lane Alternative**
 - a. Recap of Findings Presented at January 2016 PAC (*Attachment*)
 - b. FHWA Letter/Recommendation (*attachment*)
 - c. TAC Recommendation
 - d. Action Requested: PAC Recommendation to GCC**
 - 6. Eastern End Realignment**
 - a. Decision Making Process Discussion
 - b. Data Input Based on Goals
 - 7. Key Environmental Issues**
 - a. Preliminary Technical Findings
 - b. Agency Coordination
 - c. Next Steps
 - 8. Confirm Next PAC Meeting**

This document provides a brief summary of the Managed Lane Bus Rapid Transit Alternative Technical Memo (November 2015). The full analysis is available on the project website at <http://thegatewaycorridor.com>.

Why was a managed lane alternative studied?

A managed lane alternative was first studied in the Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA). This alternative was originally not advanced for further study because it would offer less economic development opportunity compared to other alternatives under consideration and it would not qualify for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funding.

Based on the findings of the AA, a No-Build alternative, a bus rapid transit (BRT) alternative, and a light rail transit (LRT) alternative were carried forward for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. A managed lane BRT alternative was not included.

In March 2014, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) submitted a comment letter during the official Draft EIS Scoping process requesting further study of a managed lane alternative in the Draft EIS. FHWA had three main concerns:

- Would a managed lane alternative meet the project purpose and need with fewer impacts?
- Would there be adequate right-of-way for future capacity expansion of I-94 with a dedicated BRT guideway?
- What would the impact of a dedicated guideway be to interstate ramp terminal operations?

FTA, serving as the lead federal agency for the EIS, concurred with FHWA's request for additional analysis of a managed lane alternative in the Draft EIS.

What would the managed lane alternative look like?

In coordination with FHWA, FTA, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit, and Ramsey and Washington Counties, a Managed Lane BRT alternative was defined.

Managed lanes can be designed to operate in multiple ways. The above partners agreed that for this Managed Lane BRT alternative, BRT would travel within a center managed lane where feasible with stations located on the outside of the roadway. The managed lane would begin at or around the left exit off westbound I-94, providing access to 6th Street in Ramsey County and end at Manning Avenue in Washington County, for a total length of 10.4 miles.

There would be 12 BRT stations, and the platforms would be placed on the outside of the roadway to minimize the amount of roadway reconstruction required, and therefore costs. By contrast, the managed lane concept in the AA included eight stations that would be located in the center of the roadway.

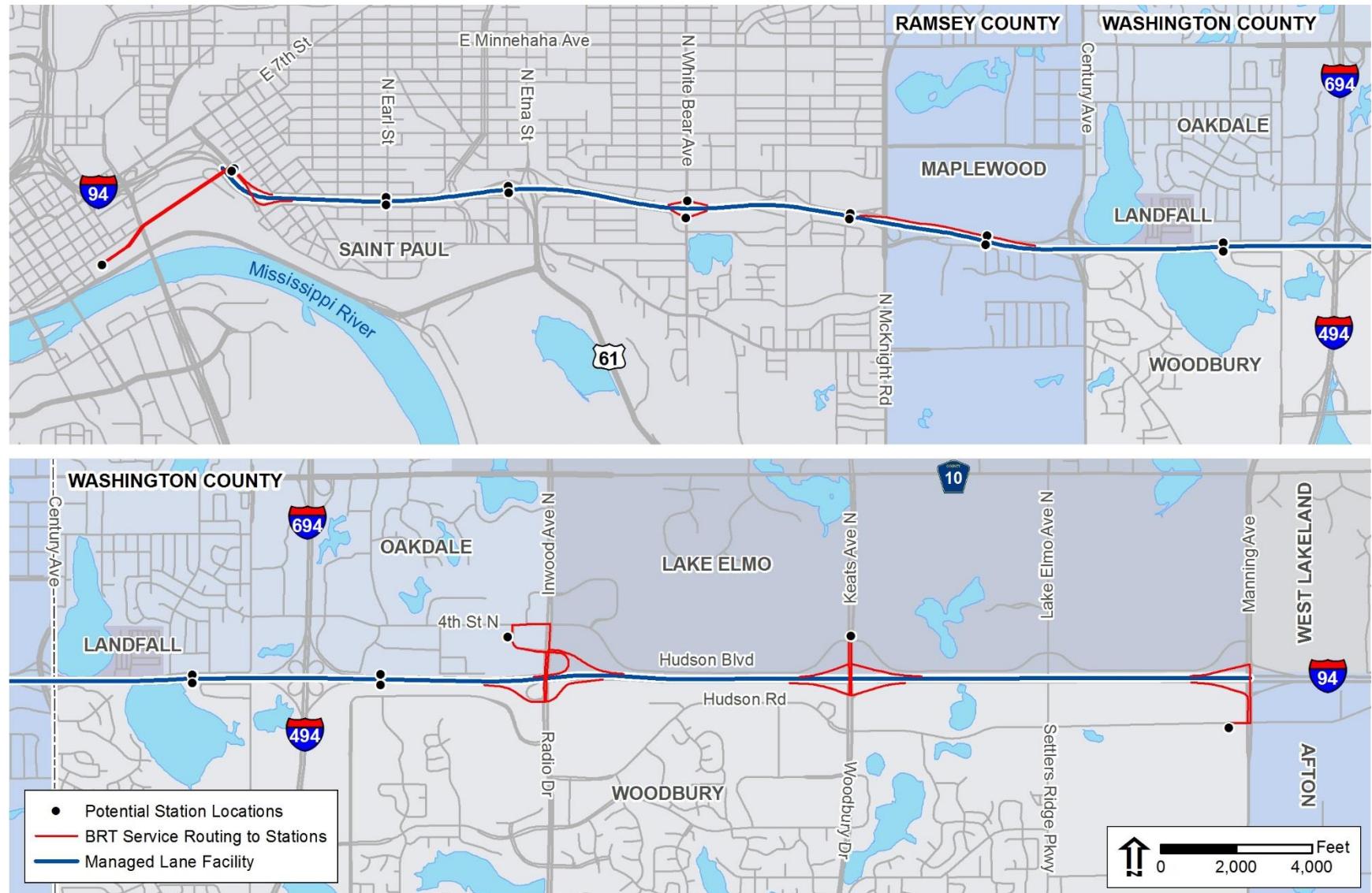
The Managed Lane BRT alternative would allow BRT to travel within the managed lane in between stations, but it would traverse the general purpose lanes near stations in order to access the station. During peak periods, or as determined necessary by Metro Transit, the bus may maintain shoulder operations between stations to avoid interaction with congested general purpose lanes. A map of the alternative can be seen on the next page.



GATEWAY CORRIDOR
GOLD LINE BRT

Managed Lane BRT Alternative

Managed Lane BRT Alternative



How was the managed lane alternative evaluated?

To gain a better understanding of the potential impacts and benefits of the Managed Lane BRT alternative, a technical analysis was completed. A summary of the findings of that analysis are presented in the table below.

Topic	Finding
Cost Estimate	\$504 million
2040 Ridership Estimate	8,250
Travel Time	32-34 minutes
Congestion	Buses could achieve modest time savings (typical congested speeds are 30 mph and the maximum bus shoulder speed is 35 mph)
Station Placement and Design	Limits station access, development potential, and future transit markets
Station Spacing and Runningway	Minimal use of center managed lane; weaving concerns; shoulder running resulting in lower speeds

The Managed Lane BRT alternative was also evaluated using the project goals, which were developed based on the purpose and need. Goals 1 and 2 (Tier 1 goals) identify minimum requirements that an alternative would be expected to meet to advance. Goals 3-5 (Tier 2 goals) reflect broader community goals and may be helpful in comparing alternatives that meet the Tier 1 goals.

- Goal 1: Improve mobility
- Goal 2: Provide a cost-effective, economically viable transit option
- Goal 3: Support economic development
- Goal 4: Protect the natural environmental features of the corridor
- Goal 5: Preserve and protect individual and community quality of life

What conclusion was reached?

Below is a summary of the conclusions that were reached, presented according to FHWA's three concerns that they outlined in their March 2014 letter.

Would a managed lane alternative meet the project purpose and need with fewer impacts?

The Managed Lane BRT alternative would not effectively meet the project's purpose and need in the following areas:

- Station accessibility (Goal 1)
- Transit mobility and operations (Goals 1 and 2)
- Cost-effectiveness (Goal 2)
- Support economic development (Goal 3)

Would there be adequate right-of-way for future capacity expansion of I-94 with a dedicated BRT guideway?

One of the most constrained areas was evaluated, and it was found that both dedicated BRT and a managed lane could be accommodated in the I-94 corridor.

Managed Lane BRT Alternative

What would the impact of a dedicated guideway be to interstate ramp terminal operations?

The anticipated traffic queue would not impact interstate ramp terminal operations (at Kellogg Boulevard, McKnight Road, or Keats Avenue) with a dedicated BRT guideway.

FHWA and FTA Direction

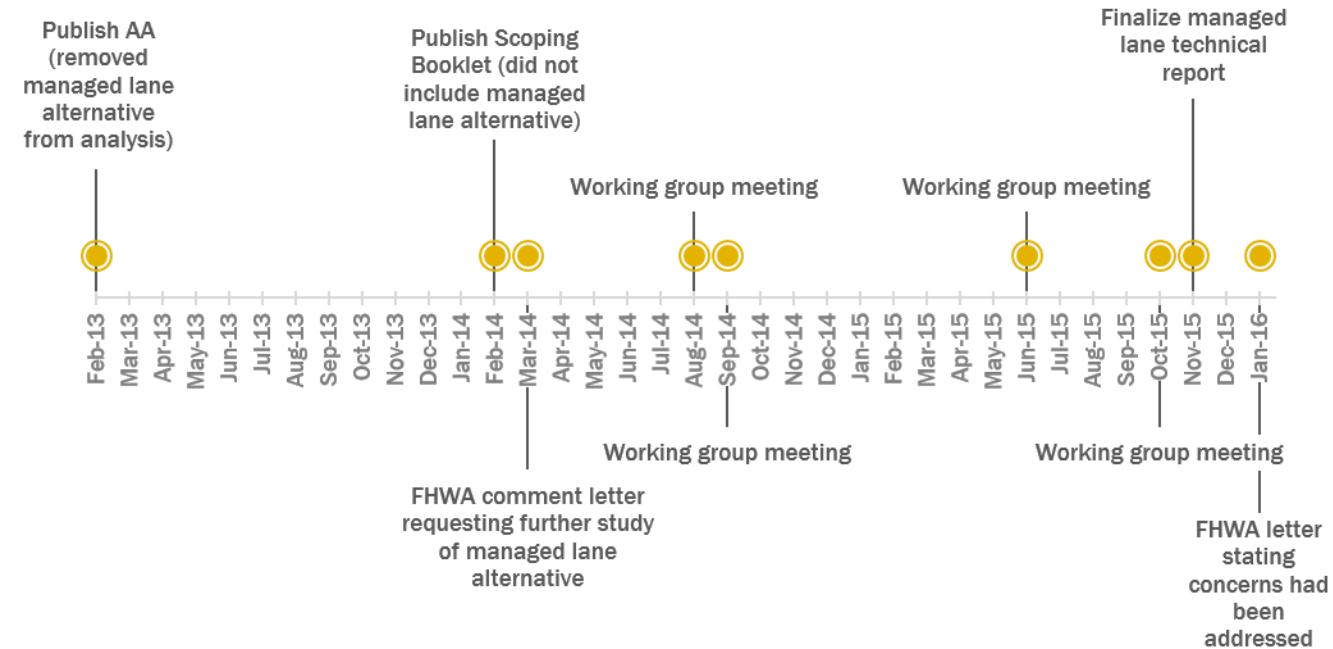
In January 2016, FHWA sent a letter to FTA stating, "FHWA's concerns have been adequately addressed with the understanding that expansion of I-94 is not precluded and that impacts to Interstate operations are being avoided, minimized, and mitigated." FTA concurred with this conclusion.

Recommendation

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommendation is to screen the Managed Lane BRT alternative from detailed analysis in the Draft EIS based on the technical analysis completed and the receipt of FHWA's January 2016 letter on this alternative.

A timeline of all the events that led to the final recommendation is seen below.

Process Timeline





U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Minnesota Division

January 4, 2016

380 Jackson Street
Cray Plaza, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-4802
651.291.6100
Fax 651.291.6000
www.fhwa.dot.gov/mndiv

Ms. Marisol R. Simón
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
200 West Adams Street
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Re: DEIS Alternatives, Washington County, Minnesota, Gateway Corridor – Gold Line BRT

Dear Ms. Simón:

In March 2014, the FHWA requested the Bus Rapid Transit – Managed Lane alternative be refined and carried into the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This request was in direct response to the Alternatives Analysis, Notice of Intent, and Scoping Booklet. FHWA's review and concerns centered on the preclusion of expansion within the I-94 corridor. Other rationale included:

- *The elimination of alternatives that may better achieve the project's purpose and need with fewer adverse impacts*
- *The potential degradation of Interstate ramp terminal operations due to the interaction with the facilities under consideration*

Since then the Gateway - Gold Line team has worked diligently to complete FHWA's requests. The results of these additional studies are documented in the Managed Lane Bus Rapid Transit Alternative Technical Memo (2015), and the I-94 Right of Way Analysis (2015).

As a result of these in-depth investigations, a shared concept has been defined, which demonstrates the Gold Line BRT and future expansion can co-exist. Additionally, the requested concept has been demonstrated to not meet the project's goals and objectives, as envisioned by the project sponsors. FHWA's concerns have been adequately addressed with the understanding that expansion of I-94 is not precluded, and that impacts to Interstate operations are being avoided, minimized, and mitigated. Thanks to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Arlene Kocher, P.E.
Division Administrator – Minnesota Division

EE/sll

Cc: 1 WCRRA – Lyssa Leitner
 1 FTA – Sheila Clements
 1 MnDOT – Brian Gage
 1 MnDOT – Scott McBride
 1 Met Council – Adam Duininck
 1 Met Council – Arlene McCarthy