Comments on the Managed Lanes Alternative projections

Excessive capital costs

Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) projects initial costs of $2.6 billion for the Managed Lanes Alternative (ML) in addition to bus costs (AA, p. 5-2). This is ludicrous. To put that projected cost in perspective, it is seven times the cost of Tampa's new ten-mile *three-lane* elevated reversible expressway and 50 percent greater than the cost of the H-3 highway – even allowing for inflation.

After consulting with many industry professionals, we project a cost of $900 million for the ML, including a 25 percent allowance for cost overruns. This is still more than twice the cost of the Tampa Expressway.

Since we lack any details about the ML, one what is driving up the cost may well be the 5,200 parking stalls (AA, 3-8) built into the project, which are almost entirely unnecessary. We have failed to find any significant parking associated with Managed Lanes elsewhere in the country.

We fail to understand how PB could force up the projected costs to $2.6 billion. We believe that the Transit Advisory Task Force should thoroughly investigate PB's projection. (Attached see comments by Dr. Martin Stone, AICP, and Professor Panos Prevedouros, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Hawaii at Manoa).

Excessive operating costs

The high operating cost for the ML is partially caused by the excessive number of buses projected for it. It is projected to have a bus fleet nearly 50 percent greater than the No-build alternative and yet gain only 5 percent more riders. This small increase is projected despite the ML offering bus users the advantage of a congestion free ride from the Leeward end of the corridor to downtown.

Express Buses will save considerable time and some will be able to make two trips in the time it now takes to make one.

The 906 buses projected are far too many buses for the projected ML ridership. It should be anticipated that more riders per bus would be achieved by the ML option in the Corridor since buses using the ML would be operating at far higher speeds than either the No-Build or the TSM.

We would like to hear a rationale for projecting riders per bus being any greater than that for the No-Build alternative.

Alternative	Bus Fleet	% change in buses			thous riders daily	% change in riders			Riders per bus
		from exist	from NB	from TSM		from exist	from NB	from TSM	
Existing	525	0.0%	N/A	N/A	178.4	0.0%	N/A	N/A	339
NB	614	17.0%	0.0%	N/A	232.1	30.1%	0.0%	N/A	377
TSM	765	45.7%	24.6%	0.0%	243.1	36.3%	4.7%	0.0%	317
ML	906	72.6%	47.6%	18.4%	244.4	37.0%	5.3%	0.5%	269
Rail-Halek	540	2.9%	-12.1%	-29.4%	294.1	64.9%	26.7%	21.0%	544

Insufficient revenues

Allowing free passage to HOV-2+ vehicles, which are mostly 'fampools' and not really carpools proper, will significantly reduce ML revenues without increasing carpooling. This policy also greatly increases the costs of policing the ML as staff try to determine whether or not autos have the requisite number of automobile occupants. On the other hand, pre-registered buses and vanpools would be outfitted with transponders signifying their legitimacy and will take little policing.

Insufficient ridership

The ML Alternative should be showing significantly more riders than the No-Build or TSM Alternatives since it will offer motorists significant time savings of 16 minutes versus automobile travel on the regular freeway. Currently buses take 39 minutes to travel 13 miles at 20mph on the regular freeway.

If we assume that the number of cars removed from the freeway by the ML will decrease travel times by 25 percent then buses (and cars) on the regular freeway will take 29 minutes to traverse the 13 miles. Buses on the ML will take 13 minutes and will offer a significant and enticing 16 minute time savings to some motorists to switch to buses.

FTA funding will likely be allowed

There are no grounds for the statement that Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funds cannot be used for the ML Alternative (AA, p. 6-10). The FTA has been revising its policies on MLs that meet certain conditions such as giving buses and other high occupancy vehicles priority over automobiles. The City has not received an FTA opinion letter on this issue.

Insufficient options provided for ML

The rail transit alternative presently has five different alignment options that have survived the process to date. ML, on the other hand, has only one (the absurd non-reversible option has now been discarded).

PB should have also examined five options for the ML alternative. They should have considered the three-lane option as built by the Tampa Expressway since it offers 50 percent greater lanes at only a 20 percent increase in cost. They should also have considered both two and three lane options in combination with more options for ingress/egress.

Unnecessary removal of the zipper lane

We fail to understand the rationale for removing the zipper lane. The only reason might be that since PB would allow HOV-2 vehicles to use the ML facility for free, HOVs would abandon the zipper lane in favor of the ML. It makes far more sense for traffic congestion management purposes, and security costs, to charge all vehicles using the ML and maintain the zipper for non-paying HOVs.

ML should never be at Level of Service (LOS) D

For some reason PB is showing the ML option operating at LOS B to D in the morning peak hour. Since dynamically priced MLs are operated to keep them congestion free, we do not understand why they should not be LOS B, or better, at all times.

Prepared by Cliff Slater, file:AAMLcomments.doc rev. November 26, 2006.