

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2

Traffic Working Group

Meetings Recap:

Last updated December 28, 2023

The following is a summary of topics, outcomes, and action items that were discussed at the Traffic Working Group meetings.

November 2023

- Updated Traffic and Transit Analysis of Alternatives Memo
 - WSB summarized updates to the revised memo and asked for comments on the draft.
- Preliminary Results Analysis – Local/Regional Roadways
 - WSB presented modeling results for the Local/Regional Roadway alternative for group discussion.

October 2023

- Updated Traffic and Transit Analysis of Alternatives Memo
 - WSB provided a recap of major comments from the September 1 in-person meeting, as well as an overview of the revised memo.
- Modeling Update – Local/Regional Roadways
 - An update for modeling this scenario was provided with an anticipated timeline for results provided.
- Other Items
 - The public survey to comment on alternatives will be open through the end of October.

August 2023

- Traffic and Transit Evaluation Memo
 - A revised traffic and transit alternatives and analysis memo draft has been distributed for comments.
 - Discussion of changes and additional comments to be addressed.
- Modeling Updates – Local/Regional Roadways (Hybrid Alternative)
 - Discussion of potential interchange locations.
 - Discussion of unresolved issues and challenges related to this alternative.
- Meeting Report – Traffic Meeting with FHWA National 07/18
 - Update that FHWA staff from resource centers and other regions met with the project team to offer information on modeling approach and experience with other projects on various topics.
 - The informal discussion resulted in a consensus that the modeling approach for the project is acceptable and reasonable, although no formal decisions were made.

- Data Practices Request
 - Update regarding data requests for project.
 - It was noted that Our Streets is planning an independent study and modeling.

June 2023

- Traffic Documents
 - Four memos regarding traffic analysis, ideas, impacts, and examples have updated and distributed.
- Evaluation of Alternative Concepts
 - Alternatives have been developed by combining transit and highway ideas.
 - Measures for traffic and transit travel time were presented for each alternative.
- Discussion
 - The group discussed visual elements and communication to help make the information more clear and understandable.

May 2023

- Highway Ideas
 - WSB presented ABM results for two additional highway ideas.
 - Discussion of impacts on the local road network.
- Freeway Removal Projects
 - A summary of findings for the study of freeway removal projects was presented.
 - A draft memo was sent out for review.
- Other Items
 - Discussion of the need to combine transit and traffic data prior to presenting results to the public.
 - The potential for a land use sensitivity analysis was discussed.

March 2023

- Outcome of Alternatives Workshop Part 2
 - WSB summarized the March 3 alternatives workshop.
 - Highway and transit ideas were reviewed to determine which ideas could work together, with some ideas removed or added based on the group's feedback.
 - Opportunities to modify access locations and frontage roads and add bike/walk connections were also reviewed.
- Update on Additional Highway Ideas
 - WSB shared results of traffic modeling for an additional highway idea, with a timeframe of when to expect further results and comparison with other ideas.
- Update on Additional Tasks
 - WSB provided a review of traffic impacts of freeway removal/modification projects around the nation.
- Discussion
 - There was discussion of destinations and populations served by the ideas under review.

- The need for further development of ideas prior to modeling was discussed.

February 2023

Joint Traffic and Transit Working Group Meeting

- Transit Ideas and Evaluation
 - The Goodman Corporation (TGC) gave a presentation with an overview of the project, schedule, review of transit ideas, and evaluation criteria for the ideas.
 - The group discussed transit station location, walkability, and results of the modeling. In the next stage of the project, the highway and transit ideas will be combined.
- Highway Ideas and Evaluation
 - Alliance Transportation Group (ATG) presented information about the traffic impacts of each highway idea and how each were evaluated.
 - WSB presented ideas evaluation results from the technical memorandum that was sent to the group.
 - Discussion from the group involved technical questions and conversation on how the information would be communicated to the public.

November 2022

- Overview of Traffic Modeling in Scoping Process
 - Summary of modeling results and comparative evaluation is complete for each idea.
 - A non-technical document describing the analysis will be prepared.
- A summary of Rethinking I-94 ideas and their effectiveness based on ABM modeling results was provided.
- WSB provided a comparative evaluation of ideas.
 - Discussion of data used to provide a fair comparison during the environmental process
 - Discussion of modeling limitations and the need for clear communication of results

October 2022

- ABM Modeling Results
 - Overview provided of ideas being considered for preliminary testing.
 - Discussion of project elements that could be added to various ideas.
 - Methodology provided for analyzing traffic impact of ideas; discussion of measures of effectiveness (MOEs).
 - Discussion of preliminary analysis results, assumptions, and methodology – note that these are current ideas and not yet full alternatives, which will be subject to the full evaluation with a wider range of criteria.
 - Full project evaluation criteria will apply to formal alternatives once developed.

September 2022

- Project Update

- Overview of changes to Purpose and Need and evaluation criteria in 2022 after public comments.
- ABM Modeling Update
 - More than 20 ideas are being considered.
 - Analysis and discussion of traffic impacts based on comparison to 2045 No Build using the same evaluation criteria. Highway and transit ideas have been presented to TAC.
- Transit Modeling Update
 - Overview of modes, stops/stations considered, and other ideas to evaluate.
 - Discussion of connections and demand in corridor. Metro Transit is involved in developing ideas.

September 2021

- Update on the Alternatives Development Process
 - Group was provided a high-level overview of the NEPA process and the steps in the development of alternatives for the scoping process.
- No Freeway Test Case
 - WSB provided an overview of comments received on the high-level analysis of freeway removal idea and went through each major comment with the group to discuss responses.
- Managed Lane Test Case
 - WSB provided information about a managed lane test case which assumed spot improvements and discussed another test case which would assume lane conversion to accommodate managed lanes.

July 2021

- Project Update
 - Purpose and Need brainstorming activities with working groups is ongoing.
 - Working on draft scoping document but awaiting final Purpose and Need.
- No Freeway Alternative
 - No freeway option discussed with the group. Key Concepts/assumptions from high level analysis presented and results presented.
 - In summary – less vehicles but more delay within logical termini.
 - Discussion among group on model details and a request for comments on no freeway option high level analysis memo by mid-august.

May 2021

- Update of Traffic Modeling with COVID
 - WSB provided review of latest study corridor traffic trends Feb 2021 – April 2021, with finding that volumes have changed since COVID pandemic, but patterns remain consistent.
 - Some of the trends could be permanent – such as work from home.
- Alternatives Development Process

- Overview of the Purpose and Need, status in environmental process, and schedule moving forward; range of alternatives narrowed down by end of 2021, and Tier 1 of EIS to begin in 2022.
- Purpose and Need reviewed and discussed.
- Emerging Tech: Advanced data collection using Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 - WSB noted a pilot study was conducted from April to May 2021.

April 2021

- Review of Traffic Working Group (TWG) Roster
 - WSB summarized results of Phase 1 and general info from phase 2.
- Travel Demand Modeling and Forecasting
 - AGT presented a summary of effort to date.
- Traffic Operations Modeling using Transmodeler
 - WSB presented a summary of effort to date.
- Alternative Development Process
 - Proposing a three-step process which includes ideation, refining ideas, and development of a final list.

February 2021

- Traffic modeling with COVID
 - Regional travel trends
 - Study corridor traffic trends
 - Proposed approach to traffic modeling with COVID
 - National perspectives
- No freeway alternative: comments on results

January 2021

- No Freeway Alternative: Travel Demand Modeling Results
 - Results from the Arterial Scenario presented with a discussion about impacts to vehicle trips.
- Spot improvements Alternative: Operations Analysis Update
 - Information from the Spot Improvement scenario was presented with all improvements combined.
 - Next steps: tech memo and managed lane scenario

January 2020

- In January, the group discussed the I-94 microsimulation model. ATG presented to the group the “2040 No-Build MOE” and the “O-D Development Procedures for Alternatives” memos. The group was updated on ABM modeling assumptions for the alternatives and results of the TransModeler simulation.

November 2019

- In November, the group discussed travel demand forecasts. ATG presented information on peak travel (AM and PM) patterns and demand in both the eastbound and westbound

direction for the year 2040. The group discussed using models to identify AM and PM peak period traffic patterns for east- and west-bound travel. By the November meeting, AM east bound and west bound modelling was completed, as was the PM east bound. The PM west bound modelling was completed in December.

October 2019

- Existing Conditions Draft Model: The group was provided an overview of the draft existing traffic conditions model. The draft model showed operations for the am and pm peak periods in both the westbound and eastbound directions. The subgroup provided feedback on the draft models and suggested some refinements. The feedback will be used to update the model and present to the larger traffic working group in November.

September 2019

- Updates on the ABM Model Validation Memo Discussion: Comments on the memo were discussed.
- Updates on the Traffic Forecasting Memo Discussion: Recommendation made to supplement ABM ridership forecasts with STOPS forecasts to see if STOPS show greater ridership sensitivity to transit service changes associated with scenarios. Project team proposed that 2040 model outputs from ABM model be used during the scoping phase for comparing alternatives. The STOPS program would be used for transit ridership in the Tier I evaluation. Other vehicle demand for managed lanes or transit alternatives would come from the ABM model. The use of STOPS for ridership forecasting will be added to the memo. It was agreed that we are not trying to reconcile the two models. Further discussions included usage of Transmodeler for bus simulation; incorporation of transit alternatives; and usage of opening year forecasts.
- Addition of Potential Intersections in Microsimulation Discussion: A total of 32 intersections for intersection traffic counts and about 30 locations for pedestrian counts would be used; cameras and AI technology could be used to reduce time and costs; conclusion was to gather as much existing data as possible and postpone any new counts until next spring.
- Potential Changes in 2040 Socio-Economic Data Discussion: 2040 Socio-Economic data is being updated as part of the Comprehensive Plan Process. Data will be used in forecasting and a summary of the difference between the new forecast and the model will be prepared.

August 2019

- Revised Draft ABM Model Validation Memo Discussion: Overview given on ongoing work and provided updated validation memo and traffic forecasting methodology memo based on the previous round of comments. Overview given of model development methodology, adjustments incorporated in the model, and a statistical comparison of base model using a series of tests.
- Revised Draft Traffic Forecasting Memo Discussion: Overview given of the traffic forecasting methodology, performance measures such as AADT, corridor level VMT, VHT, regional (PMT and PHT), and person throughput. It was stated that ABM was ready

to be applied in the corridor study and the team had made all the refinements that were appropriate for the scope and scale of the study. Working group was shown how to access the validation memo and traffic forecasting methodology memo, and summary of comments in SharePoint.

- Revised Draft Existing Traffic Conditions Report Discussion: Overview of potential geometric deficiencies (such as insufficient capacities, and excessive weaving movements) in the entire network was presented.
- Ongoing I-94 Microsimulation Activities Discussion: A video clip of the current I-94 microsimulation model was presented.

July 2019

- Existing Traffic Conditions Report Discussion: Overview provided of report and key concepts including the following items:
 - Major Factors Causing Operations Deficiencies
 - Locations with Operations Deficiencies
 - Crash rates for major weaving segments
- Ongoing Activities Discussion: Overview of ongoing activities including Microsimulation modeling and 2040 traffic forecasts.

June 2019

- Traffic Forecasting and Traffic Analysis Overview: Noted that forecasting memo was developed by ATG, which utilized the Met Council's Activity Based Model (ABM), and the traffic microsimulation was to be completed using Transmodeler.
- Schedule Overview: Following items noted regarding schedule:
 - Existing conditions through June 2019
 - No-Build through November 2019
 - Alternative modeling starting in February 2020
 - Sensitivity Modeling through March 2021
 - High-level screening Summer 2019 through next year
- Traffic Forecasting Status: Forecasting memo (handout) presented, which noted the project area, forecasting products, and Measures of effectiveness (MOEs) to be produced.
- Traffic Analysis Status: Origin-Destination (O-D) Data presented based on Streetlight and MnDOT counts. Existing traffic data (handout) presented, which showed 2015 O-D volumes and mainline/ramp volumes, in addition to speeds. It was noted that existing conditions report, and existing microsimulation were ongoing.

May 2019

- Traffic Analysis and Forecasting Approach Discussion: High-level overview of traffic analysis and forecasting approach.
- Role and expectations of Traffic Working Group Discussion: Discussion on how the Traffic Working Group Meeting will meet monthly and a Traffic Sub-Working Group (technical experts) will meet bi-weekly.
- ABM Model validation process and status Discussion: Review process overview and summary of estimates and issues.

- TransModeler approach and status Discussion: Approval given on approach
- Data Request and Concerns Discussion: Status and data presented on the following:
 - Crash Data
 - Geometric deficiencies, including stopping sight distance, vertical grades, and short acceleration/deceleration lanes
 - Existing traffic data from counts and streetlight
 - Segments with traffic operations deficiencies