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## **NHAI turns down VMC proposal**

Staff Reporter

*Plans on Bus Rapid Transit System corridor on NH 5 go awry*

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*Green belts and service roads sought to be used*

*NHAI suggests VMC to opt for mixed traffic*

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VIJAYAWADA: Creation of a dedicated corridor on NH 5 for plying special coaches of the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) is unlikely, as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) reportedly turned down the proposal.

The NHAI authorities, at a meeting chaired by Municipal Commissioner P.S. Pradyumna recently, have expressed their inability to dedicate a lane on NH 5 for BRTS coaches for a range of reasons, including non-availability of space and high volume of traffic, according to sources in the NHAI.

### Six-lane road

The VMC hoped that the dedicated corridor could be a possibility as the NH 5 would, in any case, be converted into a six-lane road. But the NHAI authorities are learnt to have told the VMC officials that a dedicated corridor would not be possible even if the existing four-lane road was converted into a six-lane one.

The VMC planned to use the green belts and service roads on NH-5 for plying the BRTS coaches.

But, it is learnt that the NHAI did not accept even this proposal. Alternatively, NHAI authorities suggested to the VMC to opt for mixed traffic on NH 5. In simple words, this means that the BRTS coaches would have to travel for a distance of 4.5 km on the national highway along with other vehicles, as a result of which the speed of the special coaches is likely to come down, as it is directly dependent on the traffic on the highway.

The users of NH 5 already face problems of traffic snarls and jams, especially at Benz Circle. The NHAI's negative response watered down the hopes of the VMC regarding pooling of funds as well.

The VMC officials mooted an argument that the NHAI would have to chip in with its own contribution for the BRTS project by developing the 4.5-km-long stretch of the NH 5.

The NHAI may have to spend about Rs. 50 lakhs for development of each kilometre of the corridor. Besides this, the burden of expenditure on the development of bus bays, bus stops and Foot over Bridges (FoBs) would also have to be shouldered by the NHAI, the VMC argued.

As per a plan prepared by the VMC, BRTS coaches enter the NH 5 near Ramavarappadu ring road and take a right turn near Benz Circle before covering areas like Veterinary Colony, Vinayaka theatre junction, Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences, Ramesh Hospital junction and Maris Stella College.

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Written by Administrator

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The proposed pilot corridor, which is being referred to in official circles as 'green corridor', is a 15.5-km circular route