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Subject: FTA article: 12 companies are competing for Honolulu's technology contract

12 proposals submitted for transit system

The four experts still have to choose another member before starting their deliberations

STORY SUMMARY » The city yesterday released the names of the companies that submitted 12 transit system proposals, most of which are steel-rail or rubber-tire systems.

A panel of five experts will decide the transit system's technology by the end of February based on the information received last week. The other technologies include a monorail and a magnetic levitation system.

The panel plans to meet behind closed doors to discuss these options for the \$3.8 billion fixed guideway from Kapolei to Ala Moana. Some City Council members say that would violate the state's open-meetings law.

By Laurie Au

Star Bulletin

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Most of the 12 transit technologies submitted to the city for the multibillion-dollar fixed-guideway system are steel-rail or rubber-tire vehicles on concrete.

While it is up to a panel of five experts to select the technology, city transportation officials say rail and rubber-tire vehicles are the most common mass transit systems used in other cities.

The other technologies the panel will consider are a magnetic levitation system and a monorail.

"We're really pleased to see that we got so many submittals," said city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka. "We got all four technologies that we were looking at. What it means is that we have a robust database of information to work with."

Of the dozen responses, five were for steel-wheel-on-steel-rail vehicles, four for a rubber-tire on concrete system and one each for monorail, magnetic levitation and specialized trail control systems.

In December, the city asked companies to submit detailed information -- such as vehicle dimensions, speed, passenger capacity and typical costs -- for the panel to evaluate. The panel, mostly mainland experts, will not be selecting the company -- that is decided in a later process in which the city solicits bids. However, it is likely that one of these companies will be awarded a contract with the city.

"Practically speaking, these are the companies that make all the transit vehicles in the world," Yoshioka said.

Honolulu's \$3.8 billion fixed guideway system will run from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann has favored a rail system. However, he said he wanted an expert panel to pick the technology so the city can't be criticized later for not considering all viable technologies.

Panos Prevedouros, a panelist and University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor, said the city had limited other companies from making proposals because of the way it had written the request for information.

"What is disturbing is there are very few really advanced bus systems being offered," said Prevedouros, a longtime critic of a rail system in Honolulu. "The city submitted a list of specifications and they were quite limited in their scope."

Yoshioka said the city had written the request based on federal requirements and specifications detailed by the City Council. "The very fact that we had this many companies shows that it wasn't a narrow RFI (request for information) at all," he said.

The four members of the panel, who still have to pick a fifth member as their chairperson, haven't spoken yet and will have a telephone conference this week, Prevedouros said. The panel has to pick a technology by the end of February.

"It's too premature to say whether these technologies are suitable for Honolulu," Prevedouros said. "I am concerned that we aren't going to have enough time to come up with a single recommendation."

Tranit Proposals

ADVANCED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

Rubber-tire vehicles that run on concrete

- » Its Phileas concept involves hybrid systems that run on rubber tires with magnetic markers on the road.
- » Their projects include systems in Eindhoven in the Netherlands, Douai in Northern France and South Korea.

ALSTOM TRANSPORT

Steel-wheel-on-steel-rail vehicles

- » Ranks second worldwide in the urban transport market, according to its Web site, with services in more than 60 countries.
- » Recently awarded a contract to supply 126 metro cars for the Nanjing Metro Line 1 in China.

ANSALDOBREDA

Steel-wheel-on-steel-rail vehicles

- » Has fleets operating in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

BOMBARDIER

Steel-wheel-on-steel-rail vehicles

- » Canadian manufacturer that built the subway cars in New York.
- » Awarded a contract in 2003 to renew and modernize two-thirds of the London Underground System.

SIEMENS TRANSPORTATION

Rubber-tire vehicles on concrete

- » Contracted in 2006 to build a system in Uijeongbu, north of Seoul, that includes 15 two-car rubber-tired vehicles. The elevated system spans 10.6 kilometers.
- » Siemens also proposes a steel-wheel-on-steel-rail system. It built an elevated "skytrain" in Bangkok and the Light Rail System in Houston. It recently got a contract to expand projects in Guangzhou and Shanghai, China.

MITSUBISHI-ITOCHU

Magnetic levitation vehicles

- » According to Wayne Yoshioka, Honolulu's transportation director, the only urban magnetic-levitation system in the world is in Nagoya, Japan, called the Limino.

MITSUBISHI-SUMITOMO

Steel-wheel-on-steel-rail vehicles

- » This consortium of Mitsubishi Corp. was awarded a contract in 2005 to build a 70-kilometer long rail in Dubai on the Persian Gulf, according to the International Herald Tribune.

HITACHI AMERICA

Monorail vehicles

- » The Hitachi Monorail System has operations in Tokyo, Osaka, Tama and Okinawa.

TRANSLOHR

Rubber-tire vehicles that run on concrete

- » A rubber-tire light-rail transit that uses a single rail in the center of the track as its guiding system.

IHI CORP.

Rubber-tire vehicles that run on concrete

» A Japan-based company that has manufactured light rail vehicles.

THALES

Specialized train control systems

» Creates electronic onboard and trackside equipment control that reduces infrastructure maintenance costs and operating costs, according to its Web site.