
From: Rogers, Leslie <FTA>
To: Barr, James <FTA>; Fisher, Ronald <FTA>; Libberton, Sean <FTA>; Ossi, Joseph <FTA>; Riklin, Sherry <FTA>; Weeks, Dwayne <FTA>; Ryan, James <FTA>
CC: Irvin, Wes <FTA>; Longo, David <FTA>; Griffo, Paul <FTA>; Carranza, Edward <FTA>; Luu, Catherine <FTA>; Tahir, Nadeem <FTA>; Sukys, Raymond <FTA>
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Subject: LRT-BRT Mode Choice is contentious in Honolulu

Hi All:

FYI - a bit of news from the Pacific. Nothing official has come our way recently requiring any response.

Leslie

City, fixed-guideway critics trade barbs over alternatives

By Johnny Brannon

Advertiser

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Opponents of the city's planned mass-transit system are trying to derail the project or force major changes by filing a complaint with federal officials and lobbying the City Council.

But the city's top transit planner said the opposition group's call for a busway combined with toll lanes for private vehicles would not qualify for federal grants the project is reliant upon.

The group, <http://Honolulutraffic.com>, has repeatedly accused the city of lying about various aspects of the project and of failing to properly study the option of an elevated High Occupancy Toll road, called HOT lanes.

"It's just an outrageous swindle that's going on," said Dennis Callan, one of a half-dozen from the group who gathered at City Hall yesterday.

Cliff Slater, another opponent, said the group hopes to persuade the Federal Transit Administration to "lean on" the city to evaluate HOT lanes and a busway. Slater said he would prefer that the city otherwise build no transit system at all.

Chief transit planner Toru Hamayasu said the group may not agree with the city's plans and projections, but that officials are not lying.

"I seriously doubt that someone with technical expertise would consider it valid," he said of the group's complaint to the FTA.

The toll-lane option was eliminated last year, when the City Council evaluated alternatives and chose a fixed-guideway system, he said.

It would not be possible to include buses and HOT lanes on the guideway that is currently being studied for environmental impacts, he said.

The option chosen by the council does not include ramps for vehicles to enter and exit the guideway, and the busway proposal would not meet other criteria, Hamayasu said.

The 34-mile system is to run from Kapolei to Manoa and Waikiki. Mayor Mufi Hannemann strongly prefers a rail-transit system, but a specific vehicle technology has not yet been formally chosen.

FTA officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

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